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all india kashmiri samaj

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Sheena Peto Peto...

AIKS Wishes the Biradari

A Very Happy, Prosperous & Purposeful New Year 2014

AIKS Executive Meet at Shakti Nagar, Delhi
December 29, 2013











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INSIDE

THIS MONTH'S COVER

Severe winter
and snow fall
in Kashmir

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Editorial

A DISASTROUS PERFORMANCE, MR PRIME MINISTER!



When it was announced that Prime Minister, Dr Manmohan Singh, would be addressing the media on Jan 3, 2014, the newsmen had drawn a foregone conclusion that the PM would rule himself out of reckoning for a third term as a prime ministerial candidate on behalf of the Congress Party in the coming general elections. Therefore, his statement to that effect during the press conference, only third in his entire tenure, had no surprise element in it. However, the Prime Minister used this occasion by making impromptu statements on issues which have troubled the entire nation during the past 10 years of dismal UPA rule under his so-called stewardship.

To start with, the Prime Minister persistently maintained stoic silence on numerous issues which had jolted his government. Uncommunicative as usual, he rarely addressed the nation except on formal occasions and never took active part in Parliamentary proceedings which he watched as a mute spectator with a stony face. Leave aside the critics, even his most ardent supporters will concede that his performance at the last Press Conference was disastrous, to say the least. With an expressionless face and pre-scripted replies, which reflected his lack of self confidence and nervousness, Dr Manmohan Singh looked anything but the Prime Minister of as big a democracy as India. It was clear from his body language that he was feeling totally out of sync with ground realities as if someone had forced him to appear in front of the media and speak what he has been dictated to speak.

For Dr. Manmohan Singh to claim that voters had re-elected the Congress in 2009 despite many scams having tainted his several cabinet colleagues, and as such he was free from any stigma, was preposterous. In a huge and diverse country like ours, voters decide to vote for a party based on many factors; availability or otherwise, of a viable alternative being one among these. Besides, he should have known that the wheels of justice run slowly in this country and the law eventually catches up with swindlers like Lalu Yadav irrespective of the electoral verdict delivered by the voters. A man who ruled over Bihar's jungle raj for 15 long years, winning three consecutive elections despite running a thoroughly corrupt administration, finally was caught up by law.

Dr Manmohan Singh's reaction to a scribe's question about the conflict-of-interest case in which Himachal CM, Veerbhadra Singh is allegedly involved, clearly exposed his intention to stonewall the issue of corruption, which defined his tenure as the Prime Minister. It was astonishing that the Prime Minister thought that people of this country would believe him when he said that he had not had the time to go through this case as yet; that too when the CM had camped in Delhi for two days to explain his position.

His vicious attack on this occasion on Shri Narender Modi, the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate, was totally uncalled for and unbecoming of the Prime Minister's position. That no court, not even the highest court of India, had found Narender Modi guilty of any misdemeanour, seems to have had no meaning for the Prime Minister; that Narender Modi has won three consecutive elections in Gujarat on the plank of development has no sanctity in the eyes of the Prime Minister; that huge number of Muslims have been voting for him in Gujarat was totally overlooked by Dr Manmohan Singh. On the one hand he claims to have been exonerated by the people of India by Congress being re-elected in 2009; on the other, he is not willing to grant the same concession to Narender Modi. What a convoluted logic!

Dr. Manmohan Singh ruling himself out as a Prime Ministerial candidate or, euphemistically speaking, "was ordered to step down", and in the same breath raising Rahul Gandhi sky high by highlighting his "outstanding credentials" for the Prime Minister's position, he brought down his own stature. He thus left the people of this country wondering as to how he had reached such a conclusion about Rahul Gandhi, whose only qualification is that of being a scion of the Nehru-

Gandhi family, and to the numerous sycophants in the Congress Party, old and young alike, that is the most outstanding qualification! In any case, every single Congressman, including Manmohan Singh himself, is convinced that their party has the divine right to rule this country! It is because of their belief in this 'divine right' that the Congress Party has not drawn any lessons from the recent State Assembly elections in which they had received a shameful drubbing in all the four major states.

Many people wonder as to why Dr Manmohan Singh continues even now to stick to the Prime Minister's chair when the man having 'outstanding credentials' is readily available to replace him? He should have hung his boots much earlier. The answer is quite clear. For ten years, Manmohan Singh was merely a figurehead with no feet on the ground, never having contested election to Lok Sabha and as such not even becoming the Leader of that House. The real power was wielded by Sonia Gandhi from 10 Janpath and logically it is from there that he must receive the orders to vacate the chair. With the mood in the country being totally against the present dispensation in the country, Sonia cannot take the risk of immediately replacing Manmohan Singh with Rahul Gandhi at the present juncture.

For Manmohan Singh to claim that it is the history that will judge him, amounts to heaping scorn on the people of India who have suffered immensely during his tenure, marked by unprecedented levels of corruption, galloping inflation, back-breaking price rise, increase in crime against women and unprecedented loot of the national exchequer.

India is impatient for a total transformation in the system of governance, and aspires for a system free from corruption and scams, under a new vibrant leadership which is around for all to see. The change is now inevitable. We are positive that the people of India will be vigilant as they were in the recent Assembly elections and decisively Vote for that Change.. Any mistake this time will be disastrous for the nation.

– A. N. Kaul Sahib

From the President's Desk

NOSTALGIC JOURNEY INTO THE PAST

Moti Kaul



Month of November 13 remained quite hectic and eventful. During the month, I took time off to visit Dubai, Allahabad and Lucknow to meet and interact with our Biradari members. While Dubai gave me a glimpse of our enterprising future generation, Allahabad and Lucknow gave me a flavour of nostalgic journey into the past. All in all, I found it a fulfilling month with a hope for brighter future. While connecting with our young professionals at Dubai, two scenarios appeared emerging - One that was focused at seizing the vast commercial opportunities across the globe and the other that was pulling them into an agonizing past with serious crisis of identity.

Back home, deliberating with my community brethren at Allahabad and more so at Lucknow, afforded me the much-needed insight into our glorious past and the urge to regain deeper connectivity with our rich Culture and Values. It was heartening to observe that even after two to three hundred years of physical disconnect with Kashmir Valley, the land they belonged to, their resolve to be known and seen as the KPs had not diluted. Mrs. Malti Mushran, President KP Samaj, Allahabad had organized an impressive programme that brought into focus the genesis of AIKS and unforgettable memories of our community stalwarts of that era. Chance encounter with Mrs. Swaroop Kumari Bakshi, 93 years of age, at Lucknow was indeed exhilarating. Her poise, clarity of thoughts and expression were indeed remarkable. Five decades of active political profile and 32 great books to her credit! I wish to quote one line from the speech she delivered during our meeting: "Kashmir has, is and shall always belong to us and no one on this earth can deny us our space in the valley."

The highlight of my visit to Lucknow was calling on Dr. B. N. Sharga, past Sr. Vice President of AIKS. There is hardly anyone in our community who is not aware of his monumental contribution in systematically putting the records of our people and events across the globe in a chronological and comprehensive detail. A dedicated archivist and a living encyclopedia of over five thousand years of KP community's chequered journey, his passion for continuous research and knowledge of KP ancestory is unfathomable. In spite of his poor health, his conviction in reclaiming the land of our ancestors is, profound. It was indeed a privilege to meet him at his legendary home at Kashmiri Mohalla and spend some great moments in his company. It was a privilege to present to him small tokens of our love and gratitude for all that he has done for the community.

During the last couple of years, I have been trying to explore, learn and reflect on the seven past exoduses of our community. What baffles me is as to how our fellow brethren who left two, three or four hundred years back from the valley, continue to retain the most important aspects of our traditions, customs, culinary tastes and the distinct value system. At a time when the modes of communication and transport were minimal, how did they remain connected and retain the important facets of our great PAST. In contrast, when one looks at the recent exodus of 1990, we get alarmed at the speed with which our social fabric, culture and value systems are getting eroded. It is time to do some basic research, to understand both the formal as well as informal strategies adopted during earlier displacements by our folks and take corrective measures in the earnest. Dr. Sharga's numerous books and writings give enough insight into the life and times of KPs of those generations and the struggle they had to wage while settling in different parts of the country and establish their name and fame. Let me, however, share my own analysis. While there could be multiple reasons for this cultural and social erosion, there are two predominant factors – Inter-Caste Marriages and overlooking the Sense of Loss. We, the newly displaced, somehow seem to be either ignoring or are oblivious of the ramifications of both these realities. It is, therefore, time that we wake up and respond, so that this small ethnic race does not eventually get Extinct.

I wish you all a VERY HAPPY & PURPOSEFUL NEW YEAR! ◘

GENERAL SECRETARY'S COLUMN

Dr. Romesh Raina



The distance between Jammu and Kashmir in miles is hardly significant. But in actuality both places represent different political cultures and realities. Political priorities have always made them distinct. Even the political expectations are also not in tandem. Jammu and Kashmir are more than two places, they are united by their shared common identity; it is a different matter that the psychological unity is yet to come. Dominance of Kashmir centric politics over the entire state of J&K which puts other regions including Jammu at a disadvantageous position, is one of the reasons for the making of this situation.

In addition to it many factors have contributed to the psychological disunity between the two regions of the same state; separatism in Kashmir has lot to do with it. This is perhaps one of the reasons for lack of common political discourse and emergence of alternate political strands. It is taking up speed and direction which affects ideas and issues in the process. It will not cease but will intensify if the sentiment of injustice and discrimination to Jammu is not addressed with an unwavering resolve. In seeking an answer one has to first understand that it comes in various shapes and forms. It is reflected through geographical, historical and cultural expressions.

AIKS activities for the month of December include:

1. **Core Group Meetings:**

a) The Core Group Meeting held at AIKS office, was presided over by Shri Moti Kaul and attended by Sarvashri Vijay Aima, M. K. Pajan, M. L. Malla, Col. Tej K. Tikoo, Dr. Romesh Raina, A. N. Kaul Sahib, Puran Patwari.

The meeting decided of holding an AIKS Executive Committee meeting at 112-113/25, Shakti Nagar, Delhi on December 29, 2013.

b) The Core Group Meeting held at AIKS office, was presided over by Pandit Gautam Kaul, Sr. Vice President. Sarvashri M. L. Malla, Vijay Aima, Col. Tej K Tikoo, Dr. Romesh Raina, A. N. Kaul Sahib and Shri S. K. Bhan, Vice President Koshur Sumchar, Ahmedabad (special invitee), attended.

The meeting discussed the contours of the forthcoming AIKS Conclave to be held in March 2013 and the related activities.

c) Another meeting was held on 28th December, 2013 at AIKS HQ. It was presided over by President Shri Moti Kaul and attended by Sarvashri Vijay Aima, Col. Tej K. Tikoo, M. L. Malla, Dr. Romesh Raina, A. N. Kaul Sahib and Ms. Alka Lahori. The meeting fine tuned the proposed AIKS Conclave to be held on March 30 at Lal Ded Memorial Hall, KECSS, B-36, Pamposh Enclave, G.K. – I, New Delhi.

2. **AIKS Executive Committee Meeting:**

AIKS held its Executive Committee meeting at Plot Nos. – 112 & 113/Block 25 at Shakti Nagar, Delhi on the 29th December 2013 to consider pushing forward the long-pending project of constructing a community asset over it. The meeting was presided over by Shri Moti Kaul, President, and was attended by Sarvashri Gautam Kaul (Sr. Vice President), Vice Presidents Col. Tej K. Tikoo, Moti Lal Malla, Rohit Dhar, Maharaj Pajan; General Secretary Dr. Romesh Raina; former President AIKS and AIKS Trust Chairman M. K. Kaw; A. N. Kaul Sahib, Ms. Alka Lahori, Puran Patwari, P. K. Kilam, M. K. Machama, Ajay Pandita and Bansi Razdan.

The meeting was also attended by the office bearers of the Kashur Sumchar *viz*; Shri Hira Lal Wangnoo, Shri Rajinder Ganjoo, P. K. Raina, Arun Shalia and P. L. Kaul, as special invitees. The other special invitees were Prof. B. B. Dhar, KECSS President, Shri C. L. Gadoo and Shri P. L. Mattoo.

This meeting was in continuation of the previous meeting held at the site, after the historic *bhoomi pujan* ceremony on October 12, 2008 under the leadership of Shri M. K. Kaw. The meeting assumes significance insofar as it concretised a way forward towards the execution of the project of building a suitable community asset on the plot. The meeting started with a two minutes' silence in memory of late Shri Shiban Ji Dudha, former Gen. Secy. AIKS, who passed away suddenly in November 2013.

Shri Moti Kaul, in his address, welcomed all members who had come from distant parts of NCR and presented a brief outline of the Shakti Nagar Project. He apprised the members about

the commitment of AIKS towards the construction of a building on the plot and urged all the members to help AIKS in fulfilling this commitment. Shri Hira Lal Wangnoo, President, Kashur Sumchar, along with his other office bearers, assured of their full co-operation to AIKS in this community endeavour.

A useful and productive discussion followed in which all members expressed concern over the inordinate delay in the execution of this long pending project due to various reasons and made useful suggestions on the subject which resulted in the following decisions: -

1. A Joint Management Committee (JMC) was constituted as per the agreement reached between AIKS and Kashur Sumchar to look after all policies and plans to ensure that the project gets underway.

2. The seven member Joint Management Committee (JMC) will comprise of Sarvashri Moti Kaul, Vijay Aima, M. L. Malla, Dr. Romesh Raina from AIKS and Sarvashri Hira Lal Wangnoo, Rajinder Ganjoo and Arun Shalia from Kashur Sumchar.

3. The JMC was authorised to take appropriate steps to evolve a blueprint and its future follow up like getting necessary permissions and clearances from various authorities and appointment of an architect as first steps in this direction.

4. Basic steps like constructing a small hut for a chowkidar and appointment of a permanent chowkidar to be posted at the plot, be taken immediately.

5. That the project be completed in a time bound manner.

6. AIKS was urged to issue an appeal regarding the resource mobilisation for construction activities.

In response to the appeal issued by President AIKS Shri Moti Kaul at the meeting about fund generation, most of the members present committed an amount totalling around Rs. Two Lakhs and eight thousand on the spot.

The meeting was very meaningful and productive. Shri M. L. Malla presented the vote of thanks.

3. Meeting of Joint Management Committee (JMC): -The first meeting of the JMC was held on 30th December, 2013 at AIKS office. The meeting was presided over by its Chairman, Shri Moti Kaul and was attended by its members Sarvashri M. L. Malla, Vijay Aima, Dr. Romesh Raina from AIKS and Sarvashri Hira Lal Wangnoo, Arun Shalia and Rajinder Ganjoo from Kashur Sumchar with Shri P. L. Kaul (special invitee). The meeting discussed the entire gamut of the execution of the project and decided that the following steps be taken urgently.

i) Procuring water and electricity connection at the plot.

ii) Appointment of a security guard.

iii) To repair the name plate and fix up a new board at the plot.

4. AIKS Conclave – III – At its meeting in Shakti Nagar, AIKS Executive Committee decided to hold the Conclave at Lal Ded Memorial Hall, KECSS, B-36, Pamposh Enclave, G.K. – I, New Delhi on March 30, 2014. The details of programme will be intimated separately. ◘

Kashur Sumchar Office - bearers

Please be informed that the office bearers of Kashur Sumchar are the following:

Shri H. L. Wangnoo - President
129, Munirka Enclave, New Delhi – 110067
Mob: 9312642220

Shri P. K. Raina - Sr. V. President
9/85, Sec-3, Rajinder Nagar, Sahibabad
Mob: 9810042512

Shri Deepak Bhan – Vice President
D-30, Anand Vihar, Delhi-92
Mob: 9810877875

Shri Rajinder Ganjoo – General Secretary
C-83, Mahendru Enclave, Delhi - 110009
Mob: 8860082525/9868219326

Shri Arun Shalia - Treasurer
D-42, Pamposh Enclave, Greater Kailash-1
New Delhi – 110048
Mob: 9810277197

Shri P. L. Kaul - Secretary
B 2/85, Phase II, Ashok Vihar, Delhi
Mob: 9711664698

The following members would represent Kashur Sumchar on the joint committee of AIKS and Kashur Sumchar.
Shri H. L. Wangnoo, Shri C. L. Gadoo
Shri Rajinder Ganjoo

Rajinder Ganjoo - General Secretary
Kashur Sumchar
31.12.2013

To,
Dr. Romesh Raina - General Secretary, AIKS

FROM THE AFFILIATES

Kashyap Kashmir Sabha, Gurgaon

Annual Hawan & AGM

We congratulate all the community members who participated in the Hawan ceremony and cultural events during the Annual Havan - 2013 at Sector – 55, Gurgaon. The event was successfully completed on 15th December, 2013 afternoon and saw participation from over 800 community members from across NCR.

It was a treat to listen to wonderful and sweet Bhajans from Pamposh Koul and B L Koul (Deep) on Saturday i.e 14th evening and all stayed back till early morning of 15th. Pamposh is the talented son of Shri Pran Nath Koul ji and grandson of Late Pushkarnathji Koul (Posh Bab).

It seems KKS Gurgaon has been raising the bar in terms of making this annual community event the most memorable, much cherished and most sought after event for the community as a whole and has been largely successful in bringing the young, the old and all biradari members from far flung areas of NCR to be part of this one large extended family under one roof.

The hallmark of this event has been how beautifully our tradition, our culture, our values are stitched together to present a wholesome Kashmiriyat to the community members especially, the young ones, who would have just heard about such a great community only in stories from their elders at home.

This event is an appropriate platform where one could see a carnival kind of look alike where elderly members are dressed up in their traditional attire like pheren, Dussa, Safa etc., with children making their presence felt by engaging into various activities in the form of art, singing, *Shankh* (conch) blowing, talent hunt etc.. and are rewarded in the end for some brilliant performances. Even all these activities are meticulously planned showcasing our values and traditions through their performances like in paintings, – the theme was our ancient Kashmiri monuments – different weathers and our Kashmiri saints etc., in talent hunt the children were encouraged to perform in any manner which had Kashmiri touch by way of singing folk songs, skits or Kashmiri Riddles (*pratsch*).



Like every year, Shankh blowing Competition has been just the required icing on the cake which tests various contestants especially the grown-ups for their strength in their lungs and the quality of *shankh-naad* which is then used to decide for the winners who can blow the longest. Though this record has been successfully defended by our Pt. Satish Koul for the last several years now and remained unmoved even this year too.



Last but not the least, we had yet another favourite item –The Koshur Tambola which is eagerly looked forward by one and all, not only for the cash prizes which are there to be won but, it brings much refreshing change when it is played in our native Kashmiri language and with our experienced anchors Pt. Rajesh Pandit and Pt. Pankaj Dhar, it becomes really music to the ears the way they conduct the entire Tambola and leaves the audience in splits with some of their witty remarks and well timed humour. Even the ones who don't win any cash prizes they get their worth of spend here.

The Annual Hawan in its all glory concluded with *Puranahooti* and later all members were served Naveed with traditional *Daal, Dam-Monjya, Tchok Vaangun* etc... which really brought life to the otherwise subdued taste-buds. Special arrangements were also made to hand over *Naveed* to each family.



All around, the place wore a festive look and there were few stalls booked as well, which were selling some exquisitive Kashmiri stuff including *masala*, some grocery items, some beautiful paintings, embroidered dress material, *pherens*, pashmina shawls etc..

This occasion saw an AGM being which was chaired by KKS Gurgaon President Dr. Raj Kachroo, along with his EC members, held a day before on 14th Dec' 2013 which got a good response with people participating through the entire proceedings. AGM later was followed by some mesmerizing, soul stirring *bhajans* presented by our young Pamposh Koul, B. L. Koul (Deep) and Smt. Purnima Raina Ji which continued till large part of the midnight.



During on-spot drive for KKS Life Membership, lot of new life members were added to an ever increasing list of KKS life members which stands around 600 families roughly at the moment and requires continuous patronage from one and all from our biradari.

This report would lose its sheen if we don't mention about the selfless efforts put in by various Executive members led from the front by its ever charismatic, ever energetic young Vice President Pt. Rohit Dhar, Gen Secy. Pt. Ajay Pandita, Ex- president Pt. Vijay Aima, Treasurer Pt. O. N. Koul, anchor Pt. Vinod Pandita, Pt. Sanjay Saproo and scores of other volunteers who worked behind the scene, including a lot of our female force which just ensured – A GRAND SUCCESSFUL EVENT in the end!!! It was yet another feather added to the crown of KKS Gurgaon.

Children bagged prizes in various categories and all enjoyed the festive atmosphere created for the event.

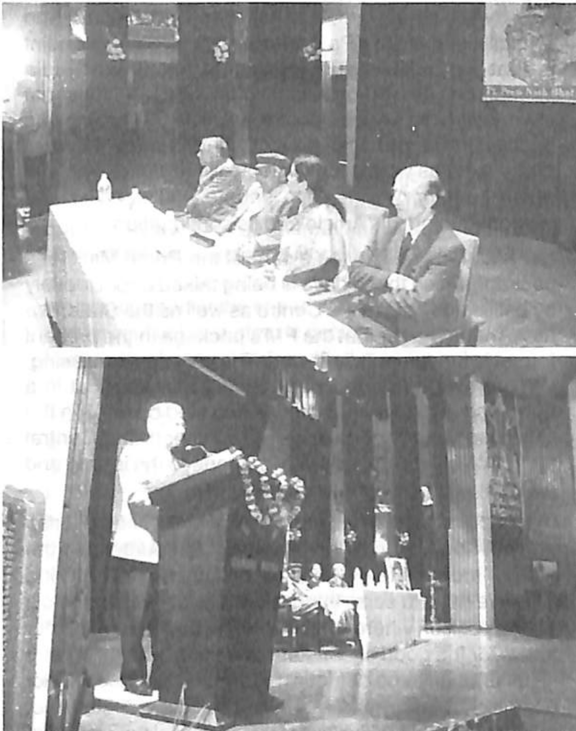
Stay Healthy, Stay Blessed, till we meet next year!!!

- A report from Ajay Pandita
General Secretary

THE NEWS FOLIO

Premnath Bhat Martyrdom Anniversary

Prem Nath Bhat Memorial Trust organized a hugely attended programme on 27th December, 2013 to pay homage to Pandit Prem Nath Bhat and hundreds of KP martyrs who laid down their lives for the good of Kashmir and the good of our country. On this occasion, Mr. Moti Kaul, President of All India Kashmiri Samaj (AIKS) was the sole Community speaker. Ms Nirmala Sitharaman- National Spokesperson - BJP was the Chief Guest at the function which was presided over by Dr. K. L. Chowdhury. Mr. Moti Kaul described Pandit Prem Nath ji, as a torch bearer and one of our stalwarts who led from the front. His humility, conviction and nationalist fervour was extraordinary.



Highlighting the core issues and concerns of the community, Mr. Moti Kaul castigated both the State and Centre Govts. for their utter neglect and insensitivity towards this beleaguered community. In the garb of disunity, the Govt. was spreading false rumours to camouflage their ulterior motives. We have been and shall continue to be united in our resolve to address issues like enhancement of relief, employment to the youth, livable facilities at Jagti camp, encroachment of migrant properties, Temples & Shrines etc. It is time that we demolish their myth about both – our so-called disunity and our return to the valley.

Coming down heavily on the state administration, Mr. Kaul made it clear that they have never been sincere about the return and rehabilitation of KPs in the valley. Even after two decades in exile, they have not even presented a simple blueprint for the same. What sort of rehabilitation can we expect from these people, who refuse to even recognize the need for our religious symbols to be part of our heritage, he said. In the backdrop of political players trying to reconnect with KPs, Mr. Kaul cautioned the audience to be vigilant. Today it is not just the return and rehabilitation of KPs to the valley but the important point is that we must ensure once and for all that India strengthens its hold on Kashmir in totality. We must not shy away from talking about Article 370 and the need for its comprehensive debate throughout the nation. Commenting on the national scene, Mr. Kaul conveyed a sense of optimism in the historical wave that is spreading across the country. It is not the time to sit on the fence but instead to put our best foot forward and be part of this historical change, he concluded.

In her address, Ms. Nirmala Sitharaman said 'The way Mr. Kaul gave a comprehensive account of the community's short and long term concerns, I am dumb founded'. I was not prepared for this as I had come prepared only for paying tributes to Pandit Prem Nath Bhat. However, she assured that the concerns of the community would be taken seriously in Delhi. She philosophically touched on Kashmir, Adi Shankaracharya, Lal Ded, Shaivism, equality of women in Kashmir, and linked the richness of Kashmir Shaivism with the southern faiths. She termed *Saundariya Lahari* as a romantic poetry and appreciated Kashmir for producing Gurus like Adi Shankaracharya who hailed from Kashmir and shown the way to whole of India.



Two minutes' silence was observed at the start of the programme to pay tributes to Shaheed Prem Nath Bhat and other martyrs. On this day, the nearest kins of the two Kashmiri Pandit martyrs of Kashmir were honoured with a shawl and a certificate. Dr. R. L. Bhat read the citation in favour of the martyrs.

In his presidential address, Dr. K. L. Chowdhury urged the BJP spokesperson to show the strength and solve the problems of the Pandits. 'Last time you were in coalition *dharma* but this time we pray that you get the majority of your own', said Dr. Chowdhury, because Kashmiri Pandits do not constitute a vote-bank, that is why we are given no importance.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks from Dr. Arjan Nath Pandita, the President of the Trust. Shri Heera Lal Bhat conducted the proceedings.

- A report by Adarsh Ajit
Naad Bureau, Jammu

Full text of the Speech delivered by Shri Moti Kaul

Ladies & Gentlemen,

At the outset, I wish to thank Pandit Premnath Bhat Memorial Trust for both inviting me as well as giving me an opportunity to speak on this important occasion. Late Pt. Premnath ji Bhat was a torch bearer and one of our stalwarts who always led from the front. His humility, conviction and nationalist fervour was extraordinary. I must applaud the Trust and its Managing Committee for making this date and event as part of our annual Calendar.

It has been my great fortune that I remained deeply connected with my folks for over four decades. After my Engineering, from the day I landed in Mumbai on 12th of September 1971, I have remained part and parcel of all the ups and downs of my community. Of course since 1990, it has been a perpetual and mental struggle for all of us. We cannot and must not forget the fateful night of 19th January 1990, when we were hounded out from our homes and hearths from Kashmir. It having happened in an independent and strong India, is nothing but shameful. More than two decades as refugees in one's own country is unthinkable. We are all aware of the human displacements throughout the world as well as our own country. Months, a year, or may be two years – at the end of it the people do return to their homes. In our case it is nowhere visible even today. The disgraceful part is that even after 23 years, we still do not know, as to who and why we were thrown out in the first place.

During the last one year, it is observed that various political players are trying to connect with our folks for their selfish interests. Let each political party present a balance sheet, explaining specifically as to what they have done for this beleaguered community in exile. Suddenly they have become active because of our votes. Though few in number they have seen that we could play an important role in various constituencies. Friends, this time we have to be vigilant. It is not only for the return and rehabilitation of the KPs to the valley, the important point is that we must ensure once and for all that India strengthens its hold on Kashmir in totality. We must not shy away from talking about the Article 370 which has become the biggest impediment both in the development of the state as well as physiological integration with the entire country. We need to debate and question the wisdom behind this Article and its continuation.

Many of you may be aware of the Prime Minister's package which these days is being talked about loosely by politicians both at the Centre as well as the State. We have made it clear that the PM's package in the present format is fundamentally flawed. The very soul is missing. We are aware that this package was brought out in a hurry and in response to the petition filed by AIKS in the Supreme Court and their directive to both the Central and State Govts. to decisively respond to the issues and concerns of the displaced community.

Friends, on the national scene we are seeing today a ray of hope. Since I travel across the country and the globe, I must share my sense of optimism in this Shining Star. We have to seize this opportunity to get India into a strong position where we can explore and determine our future for the good of our state and the nation at large. It is not enough to be patriotic. Sitting on the fence will not do. We have to make a choice and put our best foot forward. So let us all be part of this historical development and historical change for the good of this nation.

I am glad to be actively associated with All India Kashmiri Samaj, which played a pivotal role in responding to 1990 tragedy and keeping the community connected in diaspora. Today there are no more old and new Kashmiri Pandits. That thin line has disappeared and for good. Today even the insignificant caste barriers and

other aberrations in our society too, have disappeared for good. I am immensely pleased to mention that by far, we are today a close knit family of more than 7 lakh KPs spread across the country and the globe. All of you have played an important role in this endeavour. We have to demolish the myths spread by vested interests that we are not united and do not want to return to the valley. Every KP organisation has been united in demanding enhancement of Cash Relief, Employment to the Youth, problems of Over-Aged Youth, Liveable Facilities at Jagti, passing of Temples & Shrines Bill, effective implementation of Migrant Properties etc.

I must applaud my folks for responding to our unprecedented tragedy with Grace and Foresight. History shall indeed write in golden letters the survival of this race under the most trying times. Today, it is heartening to see thousands of our young boys and girls doing exceedingly well in various professions throughout the country and overseas. We are indeed proud of them. At the same time we are also concerned about a section of our society, who continue to struggle at different locations in the country, predominantly at Jammu. We also have a small section who chose to stay back in the valley and had to face the wrath of terrorism face to face. However, in spite of economic prosperity, our Souls remain Restless because of our rootlessness and the crisis of identity. Recently, while connecting with my folks at Allahabad and Lucknow, it baffled me to see as to how our fellow brethren who left two, three, four hundred years back from the valley, continue to retain large segment of our culture and value system. At a time when the modes of communication were dismal, how did they remain connected and retain the important facets of our great PAST. When one looks at our recent exodus of 1990, we get alarmed at the speed with which our social fabric, culture and value system is getting threatened. We need to introspect and take corrective measures.

Friends, as far as our return to Kashmir is concerned, we have to plan our moves very carefully. We need to ensure that our return is strictly on our Terms. We cannot afford to be trapped this time. It is so very unfortunate that even after two decades Govt. has not prepared even a simple blueprint for our return and rehabilitation. What sort of rehabilitation can we expect from these people, who refuse to even recognise the need for our religious symbols to be part of our heritage. It was only because of their utter neglect and insensitivity, that AIKS took the initiative and organised a Global Meet on 4th March 2012, which was attended by most of the KP organisations and stalwarts of our community from J&K, Delhi, across the country and globe. We are committed to pursuing with the resolutions that were passed on that historic day. Having said that, we need to convey in unequivocal terms that Kashmir has and shall always belong to us as much as to any other community. We shall fight tooth and nail to reclaim our legitimate space in the valley - be it Economic, Political, Social and Religious.

JAI HIND

Sahitya Akademi's *Kavisandhi* – An evening with Sunita Raina Pandit

A colourful poetry session *Kavisandhi*, was organized on December 16, 2013 by Sahitya Akademi Delhi at its state-of-the-art Conference Hall at Rabindra Bhavan, Ferozeshah Road, New Delhi. The star poetess of the evening was Ms. Sunita Raina Pandit, the most popular face in the Kashmiri literary world. Prof. Mohd. Zaman Azurda, Convenor, Sahitya Akademi's Kashmir Advisory Board and an acknowledged poet and writer, presided over the function. Introducing Sunita Raina Pandit to the audience, he spoke highly about the poetic genius of Sunita who has several poetry collections to her credit. Some of her published works which have won rave reviews are *Man Sar Tsyunum, Rihij Yaad, Swanzal, Pot Zooni Vathith,* and a Hindi poetry collection – *Chinar Ke Aansoon.*





On this occasion, Dr. Sreenivasa Rao, Secretary and Ms. Renu Mohan Bhan, Deputy Secretary of the Sahitya Akademi, referred to the new initiative of the *Kavisandhi* in which one prominent poet of one of the recognized languages of the Constitution is invited to recite his/her choicest poetic compositions. In this context, they welcomed Sunita Raina Pandit representing the Kashmiri language and looking

at the impressive audience in the Conference Hall, appreciated the popularity of the young poetess and her compositions. Both said it was for the first time that the *Kavisandhi* programme has attracted so many listeners.

Ms. Sunita Raina Pandit then took over and, for over an hour, held the audience spellbound reciting her most popular compositions, full of passion, ethos and the pain of separation from her motherland and what she misses while living in a state of exile. She has mastered the art of simple diction, expression and style. Her ghazals have been rightly described as one of absorbing conversation and mysterious solidarity. For every presentation she received thunderous applause.





Many of her poems have been translated into English and other languages, Arvind Gigoo has lately translated some of her poems and published them under the title Light and Shade.

The receptive audience included several scholars, writers, poets, editors journalists, critics and film makers. Prominent ones spotted included Prof. M. H. Zafar, Prof. Omkar N. Koul, A. N. Kaul Sahib, Dr. Pankaj Bhan, Sidhartha Gigoo, Rafiq Masdi and several others.

[A report from *Naad* Bureau – ANKS]

Glimpses of the Poetry of Sunita Raina Pandit

[Translation from Kashmiri by Arvind Gigoo]

Reach me
my childhood
my carefreeness
my carelessness
my mother's shout
my father's mood
my moon
my doll
my swing
my uneven maidan
my ignorant you.

I don't crave
highs and lows.
I don't desire
candy and pepper.

Reach me
my memory
my past.

I remember
the hope of
the birth
because
forgetfulness is strong.

The mulberry tree
is
aflame
doesn't tolerate memory.

Thought conceals.
The eye betrays.
Strength is
dew.

Eyes lose.
Living is sweat.
The feel of death
is
the termite.
The search for existence is on.
Heart
is
a pendulum.
Consciousness is cobbled.
Thought splays.

Free Eye Checkup Camp

Shirya Bhatt Mission Hospital, in collaboration with the Sood Eye Centre Jammu, recently organized a Free Eye Checkup Camp in the Shirya Bhatt Hospital, Durganagar Jammu. A team of Doctors under the direction of the leading ophthalmologist Dr. R. D. Sood, examined 110 patients most of whom were the Kashmiri migrants. The camp was inaugurated by the veteran physician and neurologist, Dr. K. L. Chowdhury.



The patients were subjects to many tests and were provided with the necessary medicines on spot. 25 patients were detected for cataract. The Sood Eye Centre Rehari offered surgery to all such patients at 30% concession. Dr. Bhavani Raina, MS, informed at the conclusion of the camp that mostly the patients were suffering from diabetes and hypertension which resulted in the premature damage of their eyes. According to her usually eye sight becomes weak by age





but in the migrant population it is mostly due to these chronic diseases. She informed that children become victims of the illness of refraction errors.

Shri Vir ji Bhat, Gen. Secretary of the Mission Hospital, informed that Shirya Bhatt Mission Hospital has been invited to participate in an international Mega Event. Leading Medical Missionary hospitals/Groups have been invited to participate in that Event. Shirya Bhatt is sending its Doctors and Social Activists to participate in the event in the month of January-2014.



The Eye Camp was managed by Shri R. K. Pandita, Manager of Mission Hospital, with a team of social activists - Sarvashri Adarsh Ajit, P. K. Goja, J. L. Raina and Lovely ji. The Medical team of the Sood Eye Centre included Sarvashri Rohit Sharma, Kashis Khosla, Vikram Bhan and Rakesh Sharma.

Workshop on Sharda Learning

A 3-day workshop on Sharda Learning was held at JNU in Delhi from 8th Nov to 10th Nov 2013.

The workshop was the first activity held under the Agreement of Co-operation (AOC) signed by a Delhi based NGO "Millennium India Education Foundation (MIEF)" and Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies (JNU).



86 people from different streams of education took part in this workshop. Most of the participants were Sanskrit scholars. The workshop was held with an objective to help the revival of the Sharda Script, which has become almost extinct, through such capacity building workshops. Prof. Sudhir Sopori, Hon. VC JNU, graced the valedictory function and gave away certificates and t-shirts to all the participants.

In his address, Prof. Sopori reiterated that such workshops will be held on more regular basis in Delhi, Jammu and Udhampur, so that a good number of resource persons are developed who would in turn be needed to study manuscripts written in Sharda script to translate them so that all manuscripts available in different libraries and places in India and abroad or with individuals are re-digitised in due course of time.



Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee, Registrar JNU, who also addressed the organisers and participants, was happy that such an initiative has been taken up to preserve the endangered script which is of great cultural and heritage value and asked participants to take up the learning sincerely. He assured best possible co-operation from JNU.

Elaborating on the AOC with SCSS, JNU, Dr. Uday Kakroo, Director MIEF, added that certificate - based learning centres would be opened initially in Delhi, Jammu and Udhampur and courses would be open to all people who are willing to learn this script to help preserve cultural traditions and heritage of Kashmiris.

Noted Kashmiri linguists and scholars and community elders, who attended the workshop included Prof. T N Ganju, Prof. O N Kaul, Dr. S S Toshkhani, Dr. R K Bhat, Shri H L Wangnoo, Shri B B Pandit, Dr. Romesh Raina, Shri Ramesh Manwati, Shri C L Kaul, Shri T N Razdan, Shri S L Pandit and Dr. Rajender Tiku.

Dr. Kirti Kanth Sharma from IGNCA was the Master Resource person. Dr. Girish Jha, Associate Professor, Special Centre for Sanskrit Studies - JNU opened the workshop on the first day.

Shri Hiralal Wangnoo, Senior Advisor to MIEF, thanked JNU, especially Prof. Sopori, Dr. Sandeep Chatterjee, Dr. Girish Jha, experts,



Kashmiri Pandit Community leaders, participants and people all over India and abroad to help strengthen the revival of Sharda to enrich knowledge of our ancient rich cultural heritage. He also appealed to all concerned people to come forward with literature and documents about Sharda to make the project successful.

Seminar On Kashmir Shaivism
Organised by Ishwar Ashram Trust and KECSS

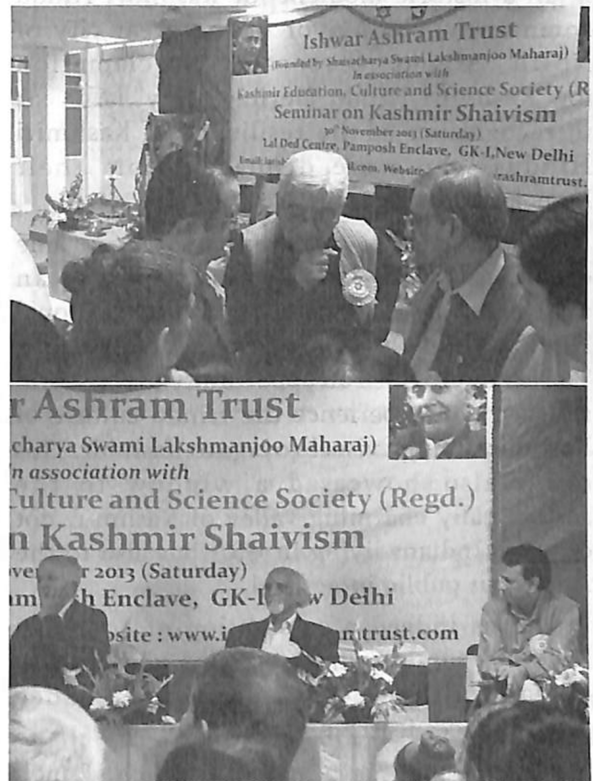


The Ishwar Ashram Trust (established by Shaivacharya Swami Lakshmanjoo Maharaj) along with KECSS, organised a one-day Seminar on Kashmir Shaivism on 30th November 2013 at Lal Ded Centre, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi. Nearly 200 delegates attended this Seminar. Scholars from all over India were invited as faculty to participate in the Seminar. These included Dr Navjivan Rastogi, Dr Meera Rastogi, Dr Rajneesh Mishra, Dr M H Zafar, Dr Varun Tripathy and others. On the academic front, the Ishwar Ashram Trust was represented by Prof S S Toshkhani and Prof M L Kukiloo. The Chief Guest for the event, Dr Karan Singh, could not make it in view of a last minute government assignment. The scholars and representatives of Ishwar Ashram Trust also released a Souvenir to mark the occasion. The next issue of Ishwar Ashram Trust's journal "Malini" and new CDs of revelation of Swamiji Maharaj (*Panchastivee* and *Paratrimshika*, Kashmiri, audios) were also released. This Seminar was also attended by representatives of various Kashmiri organisations. Other prominent persons included Shri M. K. Kaw and the President of KECSS, Shri B. B. Dhar and Mr. Surinder Kher.



In the addresses on behalf of the Ishwar Ashram Trust, Shri J. K. Dhar emphasised that the Trust is duty bound to carry forward Swamiji's mission of propagation of work and the philosophy of Kashmir Shaivism. It was also communicated that the present Seminar would be followed by a one-week residential introductory course in Kashmir Shaivism in New Delhi Kendra from 1st to 7th December for five keen aspirants of Kashmir Shaivism.

The Seminar covered wide ranging topics on Kashmir Shaivism and Trika Philosophy. A wide



range of books and CDs of Shaivacharya Swami Lakshmanjoo's teachings were on display at the Book stall for the day. Video recordings of Swamiji's lectures were played and were appreciated by all scholars and delegates. A few devotees also presented their thoughts on Kashmir Shaivism and their experiences with Swami Lakshmanjoo. All the scholars were felicitated by the Ishwar Ashram Trust after their sessions.

The seminar ended with a valedictory address by Shri O. P. Dhar.

A Celebration of Kashmir Culture, Cuisine, Art and Craft at Miami

'Preserve Our Heritage', jointly with Kashmir Hindu Foundation, Inc celebrated Kashmir and diverse global culture on December 7, 2013 "with the support of the Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs, the Cultural Affairs Council, the Mayor, and the Miami-Dade County Board of County Commissioners."

In a historic moment for Kashmiri Hindu community, the Mayor of the great city of North Miami presented proclamation for "Kashmiri Hindu Heritage Day" last year in recognition of the resilience of Kashmiri Hindus who were displaced from their homeland two decades ago.

The purpose of this event was to continue creating Unity in Diversity with an understanding and awareness of the traditional Hindu style of Kashmiri culture, art and cuisine. The event provided an opportunity to the world to learn and experience the Hindu culture of Kashmir through visual voyage to Kashmir. This event also showcased a window to the aesthetically charming valley of Kashmir, not only for Indians living in USA but also to the American public in general.

It was indeed a celebration of Kashmiri Hindu cultural heritage mingling with diverse global culture with spectacular dance performances featuring an array of styles.

The programme began with a light Lunch on arrival followed by traditional Tilak and Welcome. This was followed by *Shankh Naad* with universal prayers by children. Classical Indian dance performance by Shirin Razdan was highly acclaimed. Thereafter, a Documentary on rare images of Kashmir and Paintings was released. A Hispanic Dance, Kashmiri '*Batta - Battni* Fashion show' and Kashmiri *Rouf* were the breathtaking highlights of the event.

The venue was North Miami Public Library, 835 NE, 132 Street, North Miami, FL 33161.

[Listen and watch live on the Web anywhere listen on KHF Channel: http://www.ustream.tv/channel/khfoundation]

Veethika awarded scholarship

Miss Veethika Tikoo has been awarded prestigious scholarship after undergoing all over India competition in the instrumental music held at Bhopal by Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India.



Veethika, a research scholar of instrumental music, Santoor at Delhi, has performed at Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan and at India Habitat Centre, New Delhi. Among others she has also been invited to perform by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi in the Festival of Young Music Artistes dedicated to carry forward the timeless traditions of classical music at Shriram Centre, Mandi House, New Delhi.

Veethika is the daughter of Shri R. K. Tikoo and Prof. Dr. Padmini Tikoo, residents of Gandhinagar, Jammu.

- Secretary

AROHI Sangeet Vidyalaya, Jammu

Razdan Awarded Fellowship



Shri Avtar Krishan Razdan, an eminent writer of Kashmir who is physically challenged from birth, has been awarded Senior Research Fellowship by the Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India, effective from November 2013 for two years. He shall work on historical and social facets of Kashmiri Culture.

Kashmiri Sahayak Samiti (Regd.) Trikuta Nagar, Jammu

For the welfare and prosperity of the community, the Kashmiri Sahayak Samiti, Trikuta Nagar, performed its Varshik Hawan which commenced on the evening of 16th November 2013 with Purnahuti on the following day, both being the auspicious days of *Kartik Puranamashi* and *Gurpurab*. The entire K.P. Bhawan Complex wore a festive look on this occasion as large number of biradari members from and around Trikuta Nagar participated with full devotion and enthusiasm seeking the divine blessings. Later, the participating devotees were served with *Naved* comprising of traditional Kashmiri dishes.

Er. Lokesh Ganju
President

JagatGuru Bhagavaan Gopinathji Charitable, Cultural and Research Foundation (Regd.)

Jagat Guru Bhagavaan Gopinath Ji Charitable, Cultural and Research Foundation, for the first time, celebrated the birthday of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji at the Ashram. The function started at 3.30 p.m. on 17th Nov. 2013, with the recitation of Guru Gita followed by *Homa* and recitation of *Ashtosatotravali*. Prayers were held by recitation of *Sandhiya Vandhana*. Thereafter a *Bhandara* was organised where dinner was served to the devotees. Large number of devotees attended the function. Special prayers were held for international peace, end of violence eradication of poverty, ignorance and illiteracy.

- B. L. Bhan
Secretary

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of all, that YAIKS is NOT AT ALL associated with our organization. It is unfortunate that confusion is being created by vested interests for their petty gains. It may kindly be noted that any statement or action taken by YAIKS has nothing to do with the Aims, Objectives and Agendas pursued by our organization, which is an Apex Body of KP's spread across the country and overseas.

General Secretary, ALL INDIA KASHMIRI SAMAJ (REGD.), New Delhi

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"The Last Day"

Siddhartha Gigoo's widely acclaimed film The Last Day will be screened in the 6th 2-Day Jaipur International Film Festival on 2nd February 2014 between 1 p.m. and 3.15 p.m. The location is Rajasthan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Ajmeri Gate (New Gate) Jaipur.

Films from Singapore, USA, Columbia, Sweden, Germany, France, Spain, South Africa, UK, Netherlands, Japan, Canada, Pakistan, Croatia, Latvia and Greece will also be screened at this Festival.

[From the net]

INSTRUMENTS OF KNOWLEDGE

T.N.Dhar 'Kundan'



We all want to know about various things including our surroundings, happenings, nature and above all about ourselves. How do we go about this quest for knowledge? There are certain sources of knowledge and certain instruments of knowledge. These lead us from unknown to known, from darkness to light and from apparent to hidden. So long as something is not known to us it stands as a mystery for us. Once the knowledge about it dawns it no longer remains a mystery. Sometimes there are certain things apparent and visible but we need a proof to establish them. These proofs are called '*Pramanam*' in Sanskrit and, therefore, it has been stated, '*Pramiyate-anena-iti pramanam* – By which something is established, is the proof for that.' That situation arises after the knowledge is gained and the matter is known, seen or perceived.

Let us take the sources of knowledge first. In our scriptures six different sources of knowledge have been mentioned, described and discussed at length. Some scholars, seers and sages and some schools of thought have accepted all of these as relevant and useful. Some others have vouched for only some of them. Let us take all the six item by item without any order of importance. The first source, of course is '*Pratyaksha*' or apparent. What is apparent, visible or seen and perceived comes in this category. Since it is apparent it needs no proof to establish. '*Pratyakshasya pramanam kim?*', what need of a proof is there for that which is visible,' thus goes the saying. This perception comes with experience and observation. The second source is called '*Shabda*' or verbal testimony. The scriptures and the writings of scholars and thinkers as also the findings of researchers fall in this category. Various sciences and philosophical treatises explain to us different physical, natural or other phenomena and we take them at their face value. To that extent we gain knowledge of various occurrences and happenings and are wiser thereby.

The third source of knowledge is called, '*Anumana*' or inference. This is an exercise whereby we try to find a co-relationship between various incidents and occurrences. For example if we see some smoke emanating from somewhere, we infer that there must be fire there. Similarly when we observe something we connect it and link it with something else already known to us. We draw a conclusion, we find an inference and then come to understand and thereby gain knowledge of that thing. There is the fourth source known as ''*Upamana*' or comparison and analogy. It is somewhat different from the earlier one in as much as in the previous one we draw inference from something observed but in this latter one we come to know a thing by comparing it with something else already known to us. Something has happened about which we know and now we see a similar thing happening. We compare the two incidents and on the analogy of the already known try to decipher the new one. The former is a pure guess but the latter is a guess based on certain known facts that enable us to compare the two and derive additional knowledge.

The fifth and the sixth sources of knowledge prescribed in ancient literature are somewhat subtle. One is called '*Arthaapati*' or postulation and presumption. This enables us to gain knowledge by making presumption on the basis of ifs and buts, as and because. The result may sometimes be correct or may sometimes be incorrect. All the same this is also one of the sources of knowledge. The sixth and the last is known as '*Anupalabdhi*' meaning non-apprehension. It so happens that there is a situation about which we have no doubts or apprehensions and we make up our mind about its being factually true and correct.

Our ancient seers have stated that knowledge is gained in two ways, '*Smriti*' and '*Anubhava*'

meaning remembrance and experience. Experience can be '*Prama*' meaning factual or it can be '*Aprama*' meaning non-factual. The factual knowledge can be obtained by reference to verbal testimony or through apparent evidence, by inference or by comparison or analogy. The non-factual, on the other hand is derived often by doubting, reasoning and logic because in due time we may come to realize that the wrong reasoning and misplaced logic has led us to a non-factual understanding, which has been disproved later. One thing is, however, clear that these sources of knowledge are true only in the phenomenal world and cannot establish any final or ultimate truth. The proofs hold good in empirical world of name and form only, not in the spiritual field, where the truth is to be realized not to be read about, inferred or guessed.

As regards the instruments of knowledge these are stated to be three, '*Shruti*' or the Vedas and scriptures, '*Yukhti*', or the reasoning and '*Anubhuti*' or the practical experience. We use these three instruments in order to gain knowledge, vouch for it and take it as established. In other words these instruments of knowledge are ipso facto the proof for what we know and believe in. Take the case of the first one, '*Shruti*' or verbal testimony. We believe in and say something and hasten to add that it is given in this or that Veda or in one or the other Upanishad or in Shri Geeta. Thus these verbal testimonies serve as the instrument of knowledge, the source of knowledge as also the proof of knowledge. We know there are different branches of Sciences that unravel the mysteries of human life, the animal life, the vegetable world and other facets of the cosmos. But we also know that the facts stated in these sciences hold good so long as further researches have not been conducted. Once further probing into the matters dealt with by these is undertaken these facts stand corrected, improved upon or sometimes falsified. That is not so in the spiritual field. The facts stated there are intuitive and therefore, universal truth.

The second instrument is called '*Yukhti*' meaning logic and reasoning. This instrument works well in sciences, philosophy, economics and many other branches of human understanding. We want to know the facts about something or read about it or hear about it. Then we reason it out and try to examine its veracity and genuineness. Once it stands to reason and gets proved logically do we accept it as true and valid. Even in traditional Indian knowledge there is a full-fledged school of philosophy called '*Nyaya*' or the school of logic. The scholars of this school do not accept anything as true and valid unless it is proven logically.

The third instrument is equally important if not more important. It is called '*Anubhuti*' or personal experience. It is vast and varied and varies from person to person. We read about some fact. We hear about some fact from the seers and sages, from the knowledgeable and even from others. It may be true or may not be true. But whatever we experience ourselves, observe ourselves and find ourselves becomes the supreme truth for us. Experiences differ from person to person. What is a fact for one may not be accepted by the other. What we hear and what we read may not be accepted by us but what we experience and observe becomes gospel truth for us. This instrument of knowledge stands out as the ultimate word in our belief and faith. We do not entertain any questions or doubts on these facts that we have come to believe on the basis of our own findings. The verbal testimony and the reasoning help us to a great extent in coming to a conclusion or in forming a viewpoint but our experience and observation is the last word in this matter.

Knowledge is needed and acquired at three levels, '*Parmarthik*' or that about the Absolute, '*Vyavharik*' or mundane about the empirical world and '*Pratibhasik*' or that about the apparent reality. The first proof called '*Shruti*' or the revelations contained in the scriptures, is relevant in all the three spheres. The second proof '*Yukhti*' leads us up to a stage in all the three but for realizing the absolute truth it leaves us midway. The proof or the instrument of knowledge that goes all the way with a seeker and illumines his path is '*Swanubhuti*' or self-experience. In fact '*Anubhuta satya*' or the experienced truth is the ultimate truth, which one has to accept and follow. ■

DYING AS HE LIVED: PLAYING ON THE FRONT FOOT

Col. Tej K. Tikoo, Ph.d.



If one were to choose the first family of the Jammu and Kashmir State's cricket fraternity, the Tikoo family of Khankah-e-Sokhta, Nawa Kadal, would win hands down. The father and patriarch of the family, Pandit Ram Chand Tikoo, fondly known as Ramjoo, still holds the record of being the oldest ever cricketer to have played Ranji Trophy tournament, the nation's premier cricket championship. He was 53 when he represented the State in 1959-60 season; what is even more significant is the fact that being a fast bowler, he opened the bowling attack with a new ball. This record is unlikely to be broken any time soon. During the same season, in which the State cricket team played in this tournament for the first time, the family created another record; it became the only family whose father-son duo (son being Girdhari Tikoo) played in the same tournament together. Another feather in the sporting cap of the family was that besides the father, two of the four sons of Ramjoo, played for the State cricket team in the Ranji Trophy tournament, at varying times; the eldest, Prithvi Nath, popularly called Gasha, and Girdhari Tikoo, a prominent cricketer, first qualified cricket coach of India and a well known sports administrator, being the younger sibling.

As a young cricketer, Ramchand Tikoo had formed a cricket team, called the Kashmir Cricket Club (KCC), which he had got registered in 1930. It was, perhaps, the only team that was registered with the Registrar of Societies (cricket teams formed later, were required to only affiliate themselves with the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association). In Kashmir's cricket club fraternity, KCC was a prominent team, boasting of some of the best cricketers of the State. The team was, however, totally identified with the Tikoo family. Besides the father and two State players, Prithvi and Gidhari, the other two sons of Ramjoo, Avtar and Roshan, too played for the team. Being comprised of players from down-town Srinagar, KCC mostly carried out net practice at Eidgah, which became its *Karam Bhoomi*.

Being pioneers in spreading the cricket culture among the youth of the area, mostly inhabited by the Muslims, the Tikoo family was well respected, particularly their father, Ramjoo. Prithvi, *aka* Gasha, was a bold cricketer who would volunteer to face the fastest of the opening bowlers, without a wink, when the regular openers were hesitant to do so. He was an aggressive cricketer, a great motivator and a never- say- die player, who refused to concede defeat till the very last ball. If Ramjoo was the patriarch of the family, Gasha was certainly the patriarch of KCC. He groomed and helped many cricketers, mostly from the Muslim community, who were to become prominent faces of the game in the state, in the years to come. As the craze for cricket spread among the youth, Gasha became a well known face, not so much because of his cricketing abilities, but because of his helpful nature, leadership qualities, organizing abilities and his rapport with the local youth. He was forthright and had a devil- may- care attitude; precisely the qualities that young cricketers, particularly the Muslim youth of the area, admired in him.

In eighties, as the political situation started changing in the Valley and Kashmiri Pandit's religion became the overriding factor in determining his Muslim friends' and admirers' relationship with him, Prithvi Nath saw his many friends now becoming less enthusiastic in their attitude towards him. Nevertheless, he continued to play a leadership role within his *mohalla*, voicing the concerns of both the Muslims, who were more numerous, and Bhattas, consistently. After the brutal assassination of Tika Lal Taploo, it was apparent that down town Srinagar, particularly Khankah-e-Sokhta and the areas adjoining it, had turned their backs on the Pandits. For the latter, the place gradually became uninhabitable.



Shri Ramchand Tikoo being honoured by Governor Jagmohan on 15 Aug, 1987, at Emporium Garden, Srinagar, for his contribution to the State's Cricket

In Oct 1989, Prithvi Nath solemnized the marriage of his children at Srinagar, after which most of the relations left for Jammu and other places outside the State. Among them were those posted at Jammu and Prithvi Nath's parents and his wife, who would normally shift to Jammu in winter to avoid the intense cold of the Valley. Prithvi Nath, however, continued to stay back. As winter set in, he noticed a great change overtaking even his close Muslim friends, whose trust and confidence he had always enjoyed. They became less enthusiastic in their attitude towards him. In the meanwhile, every day brought news of *Bhattas* getting killed in some part of Srinagar or far corners of the Valley. But Gasha was confident of his safety because of the trust he reposed in his Muslim friends. Besides, the very thought of fleeing from the Valley out of fear was abhorrent to him.

In early May 1990, Prithvi Nath decided to visit Jammu to meet his siblings and his larger family there. After staying there for a couple of days, he decided to return to Srinagar. With the situation in the Valley going from bad to worse and killings of *Bhattas* now increasing by the day, all members of the Tikoo clan felt that for their elder brother to return to their own home in Kashmir, was not a wise thing to do. However, one fine morning, despite protestations of every one at home, he picked up his bags and left for his *Maej Kashir;* his wife following in tow. When his relations warned him of the dangers there, he turned round and said, "I was born in Kashmir, I have lived in Kashmir all my life, all my friends are there; if I have to die, I might as well die there."

As would be known to most of us, down town Srinagar was truly a hot-bed of militant activity when insurgency broke out in late eighties. Militants were keen to see him leave as that would have ensured that other twenty odd families, still continuing to live in the *Mohalla,* would follow suit. Forcing Prithvi Nath to leave was, therefore, an important element of their plan to cleanse this part of the Valley of *Bhattas.* Often he received threats; some veiled and some open. But he continued to trust his close Muslim friends as far as his own safety was concerned.

By the end of May 1990, when the third wave of our community had fled across the Pir Panjal Range and the increasing bloodshed of our own community members had reached an unprecedented levels, it needed enormous courage on the part of any *Bhatta* to stick on in a place as dangerous as Khankah-e-Sokhta. But Prithvi Nath was not an ordinary *Bhatta* and he continued to stay on. What is even more significant, the other *Bhatta* families living in the *mohalla* , too decided to stay on in solidarity with Prithvi Nath. Drawing inspiration from Gasha, they continued to cling to their place which had been their home for as long as they or their ancestors could remember. By now, it had become quite clear to the militants that as long as Prithvi Nath stayed on in his house, the other *Bhatta* families were unlikely to flee. In the existing circumstances prevailing in the Valley, it was an eye sore that militants could ill afford to overlook.

In the meanwhile, undeterred by the looming danger surrounding them all around, Prithvi Nath and his wife, continued with their routine, which included early morning visits to the

temples close by. Despite the worsening situation in the Valley in general and in Khanka-e-Sokhta in particular, all remaining *Bhatta* families there remained steadfast in their resolve to rough it out with Gasha, who, by now, had become a symbol of defiance in the face of extremely heavy odds. In the beginning of June, 1990, his close friends warned him that his continued stray in Srinagar was no longer safe anymore. Around the same time, the local SHO of Khanka-e-Sokhta met Prithvi Nath and requested him to leave at the earliest as he felt gravely apprehensive about his safety. But Prithvi Nath reminded him that he belonged here and he would prefer to die here rather than run away.

May and June 1990, were particularly difficult months for our community in the Valley. The number of killings of Pandits registered a huge increase, as did the barbarity of the methods employed to assassinate them. Prithvi Nath's relations at Jammu were getting terribly worried and concerned about the safety and welfare of their elder brother in Kashmir.

Sometime in the third week of June 1990, a Shia boy belonging to Khanka-e-Sokhta , was killed in cross-firing between the militants and the police near SMHS Hospital in Karan Nagar. Huge protests erupted in Khanka-e-Sokhta, thereafter. The protestors repeatedly shouted, "*Khoon ka badla khoon se lenge*". The message was ominous.

On 23 June 1990, Girdhari Tikoo, Prithvi Nath's younger brother at Jammu, tuned into Radio Jammu, to listen to Gujjar News, as a matter of routine. While reporting on the situation in the Valley, he heard his brother's name being mentioned. He tried to listen in again..... Yes, he had heard it right. It was 4.30 P.M. Without wasting any time, he rang up the then Divisional Commissioner and requested him to confirm what he, Girdhari, had heard. After some time, what appeared to be an eternity, the former confirmed the news.

On that fateful day, Prithvi Nath's wife, as usual, had left to visit the local *Mandir* early in the morning. After sometime, Prithvi Nath, without waiting for his wife to return, as was his wont, too had left his home after handing over the keys to the *Guir*. After walking a few meters, the militants (no one knows the number) had sprayed bullets into him. He lay there crumpled, but still alive, when the police landed up at the spot, very close to his home. He was rushed to the hospital where he breathed his last. He was 55 years old.

After Prithvi Nath's wife returned from the temple, she was handed over the keys of her house by the *Guir*. It was much later that she learnt about brutal assassination of her husband. Prithvi Nath's *Dah Sanskar* was performed by the police.

After a couple of days, his wife carried his ashes back to Jammu. ◘

Message From Dr. B. N. Sharga

December 30, 2013

My dear Kaul Sahib,

Namaskar! I am highly grateful to AIKS for your kind gesture to honour me. Frankly speaking I never expected such a sharp focus on me. I always consider myself to be a humble worker of the community. I once again express my gratitude.

Somehow I feel that our younger generation should know the contribution made by our ancestors in different fields to keep the flag of the community flying high in the sky and to imbibe the qualities of their head and heart. I am doing whatever is within my means and capacity to achieve that aim.

Wishing you all a very Happy, Healthy and Prosperous New Year 2014.

With kind regards

– B. N. Sharga
Manohar Niwas
Kashmiri Mohalla
Lucknow

Mr. A. N. Kaul Sahib
Editor-in-Chief, *Naad*

Kawcaw

ENCASHING A CHEQUE

M.K. Kaw



When I wrote out a cheque from my 88 year old mother to myself, little did I dream of the drama that was about to be played out on this mundane humdrum affair. I have been encashing cheques ever since I was this high and I did not expect this time to be any bit different.

At the branch of the Punjab & Sind Bank located in the Guru Nanak Market just next to our house, I went to the counter, where a young girl accepted the cheque, made me append my signature on the reverse and gave me a metal token. I handed over the three passbooks of our family, so that these could be updated. She asked me to collect these later.

I had some time to kill, till the cheque was passed by the Sikh Supervisor at the back. Idly I watched the crowd milling around the small room where the main business of the bank is transacted. I noticed with mild curiosity two females dressed in the typical saris worn by the lower classes, synthetic, shiny, gaudy, embellished with garish designs.

Soon I was in the queue at the teller's window. When my turn came, he asked what denomination of notes I would like to have. I opted for Rs. 500 notes. Accordingly, he counted the notes, fifty of these, then verified the number in the note-counting machine and handed over the wad of notes to me, after extracting one more signature from me.

Here is where the drama began. A few years back, one of my friends had been given a hundred rupee note instead of a 500 rupee note. When he protested later, he was told brusquely that the customer was supposed to count the money before he left the counter. After that, the bank's responsibility ceased.

Based on this single precedent, I had resolved always to count the money before I left the counter. I had done this religiously all these years and I proceeded to do it once again. So I counted the fifty notes and put the wad of currency notes held by a rubber band into the cloth bag I had brought along.

Now I committed my next blunder. Like a fool I went to the girl at the cheque counter. She very placidly handed over the three passbooks to me. Believe it or not, I started to verify the entries she had made, in order to ensure that all the important deposits had been accounted for. I did this for all the three passbooks, said "thank you" to the girl and started moving out of the queue.

How shall I put it? The two rustic girls in the garish clothes were standing next to me in the queue. Suddenly, many things happened simultaneously. I felt a tug at my bag and it suddenly seemed to become lighter. The two women broke suddenly from the queue and moved towards the exit. The gunman at the door asked them what they wanted. They mumbled something about wanting to deposit money in the State Bank. He told them that the SBI had shifted to Zamrudpur long ago.

Something clicked in my brain. I peeped into the bag. There were no notes in the bag. Galvanized, I looked around. I noticed the two women trying to make a precipitate exit from the bank. I moved towards them. As I neared the exit, I shouted (I thought) at the gunman, "*Arre, inko roko. Inki talaashi leni hai*".

The gunman looked at me with a face devoid

of any expression. He pretended not to hear what I said. I ran after the women who had by now crossed the exit door, went outside for a few yards. They melted in the crowd outside and disappeared from view.

I came back, stunned by the incident. It struck me that I had just been robbed of the princely sum of Rs. 25,000/-. It was a huge loss. I had behaved like an absolute nincompoop. For a few seconds I stood inside the branch. I spoke to the gunman and asked him why he had not stopped the women in order to search them. He said bluntly that he had not heard my so-called shout. If I had been robbed, I should have shouted loudly, "Chor, chor! Pakdo, pakdo!!" Then everyone would have taken notice.

I decided to tell the manager and entered his chamber. He was not very concerned about my predicament. He said that each customer was responsible for safeguarding his cash and belongings. The bank was not responsible.

I asked him to call the police. He was reluctant, but when I pressed him, he was forced to make a call to telephone number 100 and the Police Station Greater Kailash I. I called my wife for moral support. She came at once and gave the manager hell. How did he say that the bank was not responsible? The theft had taken place inside the bank branch, hadn't it?

Soon a policeman appeared. He heard the story with a bored and unconcerned air. They would, of course, make the utmost efforts to trace the women. There was a closed circuit camera in the bank. It should not be difficult to take out the photographs of the two suspects and circulate these among the various thanas in the vicinity.

Unfortunately, the mechanic who maintained the CCTV in the bank was away and would be available only on the next day. No one else was trained in the art of replaying the cassette of the CCTV. I thought to myself that our policemen were always several miles behind the criminals. By the time the mechanic was located, the thieves would be back in Jharkhand or Chhattisgarh or wherever they had come from.

Next day we saw the footage and recognised the two ladies. I had entered the bank at 1.41 p.m. They had followed soon after at 1.42 p.m. The ladies were seen leaving the bank premises in a tearing hurry at 2.10, I followed a split second later.

The cop was happy to see the footage. Both the ladies had posed properly so as to give a front face to the camera. He was confident that he would be able to develop clear photographs which he would show around and send to the neighbouring thanas.

It has been two months since the theft took place. In between, the Head Constable has visited us several times to give us the situation report. He gave us a few copies of their photographs which we shall preserve in our family album as a reminder of this event. The cop says that I have to present myself before the Judicial Magistrate to say that I have no objection to the case being filed as untraced.

I have now to spend a whole day in the august company of the Hon'ble Magistrate on the date he fixes for a hearing. Raj has kept my best suit ready for this momentous occasion. We are eagerly waiting for the summons from the Court!

The lessons that I have learnt from this incident:

✓ Never count the currency notes you receive from the teller

✓ Do not stand too close to garishly dressed women

✓ When your bag feels lighter, shout loudly, "Chor, chor, pakdo, pakdo."

✓ If the security guard fails to move swiftly, nab the thieves yourself.

Of course, the snag in following the last lesson is that there may be no currency notes on their person. You might be nabbed by the police for outraging the modesty of a woman. ■

GOOD GOD!

Alka Lahori

An overview of the year just gone by brings to the mind the disturbing image of Deadly Deluge of Uttar Kashi comparable only to Great Tsunami of 2005 in terms of magnitude of death and destruction it brought in its wake. Call it God's Wrath or Divine Retribution, The Dance of Destruction it let loose has set the Omniscient God contrary to its image of Benevolence and Compassion. But who is God, anyway? The existence of that Supreme Force we call God has been intriguing human mind since the dawn of civilization.

The image of God that has stuck in my mind is the way eminent scholar and columnist, Khushwant Singh, has described him in one of his very famous columns. Self proclaimed Agnostic, who can neither denounce nor accept His Existence without any physical attribution, KS is known more for his penchant for rationale and logical wisdom and incisive criticism of vague and superstitious. Ironically though KS's earliest claim to fame came with his English translation of *Japjee*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. Sardarji once shared a very interesting anecdote with his readers regarding his ambiguous position *viz-a-viz* the God. He said that once he had been invited by a PR company to Chennai to attend a business conference. The entire trip was paid for including the air fare and stay in a five star hotel. And when he left home, his wife reminded him more than once that she had kept some money in the suitcase in case he needed for some sundry expenses. Soon after checking into the hotel in Chennai when he opened the luggage bag for change, he was dismayed at not finding any money there - "I emptied the suitcase, turned it upside down many a time but found no money", he recalled. Dejected, he put all blame on his 'growing age and feel young spirit'. Next day, when he got up to have a glimpse of the morning newspapers, he was taken by surprise to find a surfeit of paid ads there which uniformly read 'Thank You Jesus for the favour granted'. It set him thinking, could it be really God fulfilling the wishes. In half jest, KS also offered a similar paid ad 'bribe' to God only if he found his money. Lo and Behold! Next once he opened the lid of his suitcase, his money was there, right at the top.

Closer home we have had many saints and sages whose encounter with Divinity is well documented. But lesser known account is that of saint poet Krishna Joo Razdan coming face to face with Divine Mother. Krishna Joo, recounting the incident to one of his close devotees years later said that as a child of eight down with fever, he was left alone at home in the care of domestic servants when the entire family, including his mother, went on a pilgrimage to distant hilly shrine of Manzgam on the auspicious Jyeshta Ashtami. What made little Krishna particularly sad was the fact that he was not allowed even to taste the *Ksheer* prepared as offering for the Deity. That made him cry inconsolably whole night till he fell asleep. What he saw in his dream changed the course of his life and set him on a divine path. He saw a magnificent shamiana erected in front of his home in Wanpoh (Anantnag). As a scruffy village lad with mud laced bare feet, Krishna (in dream sequence) just summons courage to have a peep inside the grand tent. Impressed with its splendid interiors, what particularly struck him was the awe inspiring sight of an extremely beautiful and bejewelled woman resplendent in red silk robes ensconced in the middle and surrounded by a large retinue of attendants. Watching the peeping little boy, she beckons him towards her. Krishna ignores it, not believing it could be an invitation for him. Mother Goddess then calls softly his name - "Krishna, come inside". Tiny boy feels awkward walking up to the majestic figure as he is overpowered with guilt that his muddy feet might spoil the grandeur of the Shamiana - "But nothing of that sort happened" - chuckled Krishna Joo with amusement while narrating the story. Divine Mother takes the little boy in her lap and after cuddling him offers him an earthen bowl of sweet dish, which Krishna quickly devoured with great relish. However, amazing is the fact that, said the saint poet—"When I

woke up I was still chewing the left over *Ksheer* in my mouth".

There was one more inconspicuous holy man in Kashmir who went by the name of Janki Nath Koul and whom we addressed as Mahatmaji. As kids it intrigued us no end as to how could a Mahatma who had dedicated his entire life to the devotion of Goddess Mother and never married, relish a non-vegetarian fare till he came clean on the fact. It was love for the exotic mutton curries, he clarified once, which had brought him closer to the God. Mahatmaji said that as a child his step-mother once spanked and hurled abuses upon him for demanding first taste of some of the mutton delicacies she had prepared as part of the feast for some visiting guests. Depressed and disheartened by her continuous scorn, he quietly left home for the nearby temple where he wept profusely and fell asleep on the steps of the gate. Lo and Behold, in the middle of the night, he was woken up by a gentle touch and an aroma in the air. He saw a magnificent woman, draped in ornate robes, standing and holding a *thali* for him. The plate was laid out with exotic mutton dishes. She sat down, held him close to her, consoled him and fed him all the dishes in morsels. Well, it was, indeed, a dream sequence. But Mahatmaji said once awake, he still had the aroma and taste of all the delicacies in his mouth and stomach full. Mahatmaji was the most amazing holy men I have seen in Kashmir.

Whether God exists or not, is not the argument. Much like Jawaharlal Nehru, who accepted the fact, albeit towards the end of hi life, that there indeed is a supreme force which controls the universe. What is the harm if we name that force the God who balances all these good and evil and negative and positive forces in the universe. For me the name of the game is *Karma,* a good deed. If we push God to the corner, he surely will rebound with disasters like the one we encountered this year. May God give us strength and wisdom to live a meaningful and purposeful life! Amen. ■

KASHMIR AND ITS MINORITIES

Dr Romesh Raina

With the exodus thrust upon the valley's hapless minorities, especially the KPs, in early 90's, the issue needs to be part of a larger Political discourse of the country. Not merely the treatment meted out to them but also the horrendous experience of forced exile and their low or non resistance to the violence and aggression. Having suffered further marginalization, the issue of minority alienation in Kashmir has become more pronounced and visible. Its relevance assumes significance in the larger national context because of its liberal secular culture in practice. This is necessitated because the mindset of Kashmir politics explains its inability to recognize the genuine place for minorities there. Fact of the matter is that in contemporary ground reality majority community has manoevoured the level playing field to their advantage and majoritarian impulses are at work at every conceivable area. The sense of disconnect and deprivation has created bad vibes over a period of time. Under the impact of deep insecurities, the issue has registered its presence in their socio-psychological memory. This question looms large as its eruption has affected the whole fabric of the state. It is argued that its roots lie in the repeated exclusion of minorities from the main- stream political life of the state.

The major issue in the present context is the status of minorities in the Kashmir polity. It is significant on two counts-one that Kashmir is the only secular democracy in the world which forced its minorities to flee from the valley and the other that even though Kashmir is part of the J&K state, yet it stays as the real power of centre and the rest continue to remain in a disadvantageous position. It is uncontested both at the political and societal level because it explains the absence of a recognizable general societal attitude towards its minorities. The question naturally arises whether the place has departed from its proclaimed ideals of secular democracy and become a place based implicitly on the religious definition of nationalism. Within this context the majoritarian content in the politics of Kashmir has been on an increase and has started to exert itself.

Looming in the background of every public debate is whether the secular state has lived up to its constitutional and moral obligations of protecting its own minorities? It arises out of dissatisfaction at the marginalization in a wide range of secular field upon which their survival, progress and well being depended. The core reality is that the majority has become a dominant paradigm in the politics coloring many of the secular attitudes as a consequence. This is an inconvenient truth to consider. Its consequences are that it is now affecting their existence.

It has produced a profound effect on the minority opinion. It is the product of an inhospitable political climate which has manifested itself in a number of ways and played a crucial role in shaping it. This is too deep and the simple terminology cannot explain it. Over the years it has morphed into a culture that can only accept violent dominance over them. It is embedded in the very aggression which has subsisted for more than two decades now, is also acting as a push and pull factor to achieve the desired objectives. It is therefore not surprising that it has affected the collective style of the people to alter the thinking of the society and that is exhibited in its indifference towards the minority concerns.

Prudence demands that Kashmir has to be seen beyond its majoritarian boundaries. This is important to allay the fears of mistrust and insecurity among the minorities especially KPs who have had to bear the brunt of the whole situation. It is a community conscious of their declining electoral relevance and their continued vulnerability. It needs to create a climate of faith and confidence in them. Therefore, pluralism though not discarded, has often remained hostage to anti-minority factors. To address this visible secular drift, the polity has to consider some speedy measures to ensure their presence as they constitute a non dominant group within a large society. The responses have to be connected to evolve an effective protection mechanism and a constitutional arrangement has to accept that this unfortunate section has a role to play in the political life of the place. The issue therefore needs to be addressed within the parameters of their rightful place in the valley of Kashmir and it largely depends on securing their presence. Under the prevailing situation, two strong symbols are central to their presence - Political Representation and right to manage their own religious, social, and cultural institutions.

Having said that minority assertiveness impelled by the apprehension of losing control over territory and the rapid political and demographic changes taking place also should not be lost sight of. The major challenges which persist are the demonstration of their will to tread on the path it chooses. ■

A Short Story

MY HOME ADDRESS

Prof. A. N. Sadhu



It was yet another time, Mohan had been called for an interview by a Multinational Corporation, looking for a Software engineer. Mohan had appeared in several interviews in the recent past but was yet to receive a positive response from any of the organisations where he had applied for a job. This time also he got up in the morning, had his breakfast and started off for the interview venue. He was there right at time and was called for the interview in his turn. He faced the questions, one after another, with confidence and answered each of these competently. Impressed by his performance, the interviewer started making other relevant enquiries. What is your home address, the interviewer enquired.

"Sir, I have no home address", replied Mohan politely.

"What do you mean" asked the interviewer angrily.

"Sir, my father told me that we have lost our home, way back, in 1990, when we were thrown out without any rhyme or reason and for no fault of ours. We are, Sir, designated as Migrants and we keep on wandering from one place to another and have no permanent home to live in".

"But, young man don't you know, before considering you for a job, we have to verify your credentials", asked the interviewer with a relatively milder tone.

"Sir, I know it. I have been asked this question at many other interviews and perhaps for not having my home address, I have not been offered the job, which I need so badly. But, Sir, may I give some suggestions".

Yes, do it ", asked the interviewer rather sympathetically.

"Sir, my father got married in 1988 and I was born three years later in 1991. May be the department could send its investigation team to the place where my father had his home and enquire from the neighbours about the conduct and other details of my father and if satisfied, they could, as well, generalise the same to his children. In fact I am their only child as they could not afford another one because of all kinds of odds they faced in exile."

"Young boy, I am afraid, it may not meet the requirement" said the interviewer again.

"Then Sir, I give you the whereabouts of the Juggi, where we live these days and if your team could come before we migrate again".

The interviewer was in a fix, wondering how could he resolve the problem and offer the job to the young man who had faired extremely well in the interview. The interviewer again asked, "Look the organisation may require to call you any time for an emergency job and we have to keep it in mind". Mohan with some amount of confidence replied, "Sir, it should not be problem. I have been able to purchase a cell phone for myself and I keep it on all the twenty-four hours".

The interviewer relented. "O.K. I will make a special case, in view of the extraordinary circumstances and put it before the Board of Directors, with a strong recommendation".

The interview ended on this note and Mohan was signalled to leave.

Mohan left silently and stared walking back to his make-shift living arrangement in the

suburb of the city. While braving the harsh summer heat of the plains, he was, in fact, gripped with the fear that his parents might have been forced out of the Juggi by some goons - a phenomena not uncommon in the Indian cities - and occupied it themselves or given it to some other migrant against a ransom. He was, however, lucky to escape this trauma. Tired and exhausted, he fell flat on a cot till his mother served him a few glasses of lemon water to quench his thirst. Feeling relieved of the day's fatigue, he shared his interview experience with his parents and soon after fell asleep. As he woke up little later, he was haunted by strange ideas, more probing than hallucinating. What if, one day, his parents take him to their home? Will then it become his home as well? Will he also be thrown out the way his parents were? He got completely lost in these questions.

Mohan started travelling, far and wide, into his imaginary world which at the nionient confined of the bounds of the valley of Kashmir about which he had heard so much from his parents. He started fathoming the depth of Dal, Manasbal and Wuller lakes as much as flying high in the skies of the paradise on earth. He drew his own pictures of the mountains, glaciers, pastures, parks and gardens. He, as well, drew the sketches of Shankaracharya, Hariparbat, Amarnath cave, Kounsernag and Sheeshnag. Living in this fantasy for a long while, he was suddenly reminded of Rouseau's saying," Reality has its limits, imagination is boundless" and he could not resist initiating a question-answer session with his parents to have the feel of reality and its limits.

"How could you be thrown out of your home? Was there absolute anarchy? Did no law and order machinery exist in the valley? How did the government, in office, allow it?" Mohan put all these questions to his parents, in one breath. Shridhar listening to these questions, immediately went down the memory lane and all the recollections of what he had undergone right from his childhood till the day he was forced out from his home and hearth. He almost went into coma, not being able to utter a single word. Mohan could not understand his predicament, and was getting restive to learn from his father all that had happened. His mother Sushma was equally confused as also annoyed of facing these questions from her son. The couple had hardly been able to overcome the trauma of displacement and struggling hard to forget it to get some peace of mind to plan their future. Mohan, however, had his problems which he always attributed to the loss of home. He had problems in his education, in meeting his childhood desires and searching for a reasonable livelihood of his own.

After a long pause, Shridhar, having composed himself, opened his mouth and addressed to his son, Mohan, who was still very inquisitive about all that had gone wrong. "Look Mohan; I

thought you will get answers to all your agitating questions in due course of time arid we will be spared the agony of narrating our woeful tale to you. I understand all that might have crossed your mind at the time of interview and let me answer your questions". Mohan became very attentive and implored his father to speak all that went wrong resulting into large scale exodus of Hindus from Kashmir ."A letter was posted at our entry gate warning us of dire consequences if we didn't leave Kashmir, all at once. On the previous day late at night an announcement was made from a local mosques to this effect. A few Kashmiri Pandits, who had also been served similar notices had left the valley and we too had no choice but to leave immediately to save our lives and honour." Shridhar

heaved a long sigh and paused for a while and then spoke again. "I know you will have a supplementary question to ask for the reasons that led to this treacherous situation but I will not go into these details as already several volumes have been written on this and you better go through some of these." At this stage

Mohan's mother intervened. "Look, it was absolute anarchy. It was a Jungle Raj. The law and order machinery had totally collapsed. The government had irresponsibly abdicated and left the helpless and unprotected to the God's mercy." Here Shridhar resumed." Mohan, this is how we lost our home. Since I was young and been in job for a few years only; I had no savings and, therefore, could not afford another home so far."

Mohan listened to his parents with rapt attention. He had many other questions to ask but judging the predicament of his parents, decided against it. He was again worried about the investigating team. What if, they come to this shanty suburb; will they prepare a favourable report? Will the Board of Directors consider the report of the interviewer sympathetically? Will he get the job, he needed so badly? While he was haunted by these baffling questions, he had absolutely no inkling that the investigation team had already visited the area and prepared a favourable report. He did not sleep well during the night, being frequently disturbed by these painful thoughts. He got up in the morning and started drawing the plans for the day when he suddenly received a call on his cellphone. The caller was the Executive Officer of the organisation, where he had appeared for an interview, the previous day." Hello; are you Mr. Mohan?" "Yes Sir, I am Mohan" replied Mohan. "I am Ram Lal, the Executive Officer of the organisation. I am pleased to inform you of your appointment, in our organisation and would wish, you join us today itself. We are in urgent need of your services. OK. Looking forward to meet you in the office". "Who was on line?" enquired Shridhar. Mohan did not respond quickly as he was excited. After a while, Mohan rushed to his parents, exclaiming, "Dad- Mom, I have got the job. Don't worry, the first thing I will do is to book a home so that we will have our home address again." ◘

The Kashmir Education, Culture and Science Society (Regd.)

B-36, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi – 110048

SHUHUL TAAPH V

Shuhul Taaph V will be organised from 21st-23rd February, 2014 by KECSS at Lalded Centre, Pamposh Enclave, New Delhi.

On 21st February, 2014 there will be the formal inauguration and the Award Ceremony that will be followed by a Cultural Programme to be organized by Pankaj and Associates, Mumbai from Mohini Mohinder Charitable Trust.

On 22nd February, 2014 there will be seminar, discussion on Sharda script followed by Mushaira, Films and cultural programme.

On 23rd February, 2014 there will be a book release function of Mr. Rahul Pandita and the award of Late Shiban Ji Raina Trophy to the best painter, followed by another cultural programme.

All are cordially invited.

- Dr. Rajinder Tikoo
Convenor, Shuhul Taaph

A REQUEST TO OUR WRITERS

Authors of articles/write-ups for *Naad* are requested to attach their PP size photographs and at the end invariably mention their email IDs and Mobile Nos.

– Editor-in-Chief

RETURN AND REHABILITATION OF KASHMIRI PANDITS BACK IN VALLEY

Prof. Gopi Kishan Muju

[The article contains the views expressed by Prof Gopi Kishen Muju at a meeting called by the Kashmiri Pandit Sabha, Jammu on 28th July 2013, to evolve a consensus on the issues of Return and Rehabilitation of the Displaced Community (migrants) to the Valley].

May I draw your attention to my book "Pakistan's Proxy War Explodes Myths About Kashmir and Threatens the Survival Of Kashmiri Pandits" released by Shri A.B. Vajpayee on 26th Sept. 1992 at Jammu during the ASKPC Convention. A long title indeed but probably a clear perception of the situation. In the book I had said that the prevailing terrorism in Kashmir had thrown up two issues 1). Retention of Kashmir as an integral part of India and 2) survival of Kashmiri Pandits which I had visualized to be under threat. While for retention of Kashmir, I had made a couple of observations, which cannot be the subject matter for the present meeting, I had made it very clear that if the displaced are taken back to Kashmir within a couple of years, say 1994-95, the community could possibly survive and we could again find it moving forward in its ancient land, but if this did not happen it would be very difficult to locate and identify the community as there would be individual settlements; yes, we would be having *mohallas,* small townships, named after the community, in various cities and towns of India, community committees, organizations and so on but it would be very difficult to find a consolidated homogenous community at one place. Economic necessities and compulsions would force the displaced to move here and there in search of jobs. Then educational background, somewhat good financial position in the majority section, contacts at individual and community levels and, of course, political support from various nationalistic forces would help Kashmiri Pandits to settle down at different places leading to settlement at individual levels, which has actually happened. I expressed these feelings in various meetings and even talked over these with leaders like Shri Vajpayee, Shri Advani, late Shri Kidar Nath Sahni and others.

Somehow I feel my fears have come true and we find the community in a disarray, scattered throughout the globe. A very important question arises as to where is that community which is committed to go back, and what is the common agenda for the community except the sentimental commitment to return to the valley with "honour and dignity". Where is that community which is prepared to go back on its own and fight for its rights. We are seeing a mushroom growth of organizations, forums, associations and so on, each projecting its own agenda but, of course, a common thread and theme of safe, secured and honourable return. A very sentimental but sensible commitment!

But what are we doing for it? We have sold our houses, lands (of course, a small percentage had no alternative but to sell their properties due to various factors, but why the majority did so when it could be avoided). Did we keep a provision for maintaining a personal physical link with Kashmir? What contacts are we maintaining with our land of birth and origin to ensure our return and rehabilitation. At individual as well as community level (leaving aside government-sponsored religious pilgrimages - all political stunts) on a regular basis. Are we and can we be in some sort of social, political, intellectual or commercial contact with the majority community because whatever be our ambitions, aspirations, political demands and so on, the majority community will get directly or indirectly involved. Are we taking any initiative in that direction? We have to ensure such measures.

Even our culture is under threat. It has been considerably diluted. We have changed our habits, *puja* rituals, marriage rituals and

ceremonies and so on. Even our social structure and institution of family have undergone a change. We find ourselves performing new religious ceremonies and modes of worship quite different from the traditional ones, which are gradually getting transferred to the Valley as well through our small interaction, religious pilgrimages etc. Our language is badly affected. New generation cannot speak Kashmiri. Our institution of marriage is undergoing change see the inter-caste marriages, divorce rate etc.

Then we have to see how we can adjust to the virtual Islamisation of Kashmir where Islam is being spread in full form and force in all corners. Even historical names and cultural heritage sites are being Islamized in one way or the other. We cannot help much in this process so the community has to prepare itself to live in this changed environment and scenario. Is the community prepared and ready for it? Past might become only a page in the history and a dream to recollect. Our numbers may be of little help. New approach and new perception is needed in the changed scenario for the community to resettle and rehabilitate itself in the land of its ancestors.

Some measures, packages etc. are announced from time to time by the government for our return, but unfortunately even before these are studied by the larger sections of the community, some self styled leaders and tripod organizations with base upwards and apex downwards, like a top star dancing and denouncing any such measure because these do not suit their projected thesis. This does not leave much space for others to discuss and deliberate upon. Silence of other sections has made them feel as sole representatives and spokespersons. If these elements have any clear perception of their contention, let it all be debated openly. After all it is the question of the entire community and not a few individuals. May be these people are right but a detailed discussion and debate of all these proposals and projections appears to be essential before these are finalised. A consensus is essential and to arrive at such a consensus, it is necessary to involve all people with varied options and concepts, return modules and plans and projects. Unfortunately there are no duly elected representatives through recognized parties except a couple of them, who too do not have much to offer. The community needs to know their manifestos.

Concept of a Separate Homeland

As this meet is to discuss the return and rehabilitation of the displaced back in the Valley, the concept of a separate homeland will have to be talked about. But unfortunately no representative of any of the factions of the Panun Kashmir is present here nor is there any representative from the age-old organization and historically the sole representative body of the community *viz.*, the All State Kashmiri Pandit Conference (Shri Sanatan Dharma Yuvak Sabha), which, instead of becoming a very strong banyan tree has very unfortunately lost its sheen with the passage of time. This homeland concept cannot be brushed aside as useless only because some people do not agree with it. The concept had at one time become a real binding force for the community and it is perhaps because of this very hangover that people do not come out openly against it; either because of uncertainty in their own minds or hoping against the hope. Though there may be some substantial force in the concept, I have been saying from day one that this concept of separate homeland is not a viable, practical solution to the problems faced by the community nor is it a panacea for its problems. I find some obvious difficulties in the homeland concept.

Three main difficulties which I see in this concept are:- First ,By claiming a separate homeland (initially it was conceived only for the Kashmiri Pandits and subsequently projected as a pluralistic concept with Kashmiri Hindus being in absolute majority). This division of Kashmir would obviously lead to a communal divide of the Valley- a Homeland for Hindus with secular elements from other community and a non-secular Kashmir where non-secular Muslims would also live. Obviously, this other Kashmir would become a hub for anti-national and communal militant forces and surprisingly both under the same Indian Constitution. This would also involve migration of the majority community to create space for the returning minority. A big question arises: can such a process be smooth, safe, peaceful and practical. Would it not lead to serious communal clashes (though 1990 exodus has already done it and we are out) but returning to a homeland would be a

different process, with possible negative fallout and ramifications. Second and most important flaw is the Free Flow of Indian Constitution. This means no Art. 370; yes, but what is left of this Article today, except that a non-state subject cannot buy land in J&K and get a permanent job. Once this rider is removed what prevents the Non- Hindu Indian Citizens from other States including the other parts of Kashmir itself, from settling down in this Homeland or in Jammu and Kashmir and in a course of few years, reduce the Hindu majority in the homeland to an insignificant minority. Of course some argue that riders will be put but that amounts to the same having some sort of Art. 370 in a modified form. Third difficulty is related to economic independence in the Homeland. As for job opportunities whatever be the situation in the State today, the community can still claim some jobs/quota but with the formation of a separate homeland, this claim will squeeze in this area only because other areas like Jammu, Ladakh and the other Kashmir will be out of bounds for the community and its youth, who as in the past and even today, have to seek job opportunities beyond Lakhanpur. Safe, secured and regular business opportunities and other economic provisions have to be ensured in this Homeland. These three main flaws, in my view, are a great hindrance in the total concept of a separate homeland with free flow of Indian Constitution, May be I am wrong but this is what I feel about it. Of course I fear many other difficulties and problems too but those are of a different nature and level.

Satellite Townships

Some people have been advocating satellite townships around Srinagar and at different district headquarters where the returning natives could be rehabilitated Of course. These townships would include people from both the communities but such a set-up could give a feeling of cohesiveness to the community as it would be living in large numbers at one place. Of course these satellite townships too will be pluralistic in character. The concept needs to be debated and discussed properly.

Twin City Concept

Lately a new concept of a Twin City, has been forwarded by a section of the community. I feel it amounts to just extending the boundaries of the present city of Srinagar like New Delhi or Navi Mumbai. Of course cities do get extended, expanded and developed to reduce pressure and congestion but without any damage to the existing socio-political structures. Boundaries are expanded and new areas are brought under habitation. The interlocutors report too has suggested something of that sort where the displaced community can be settled along with others. This concept has to be studied thoroughly and if does not mean any further migration, communal division etc. The concept might be worth a debate in the community circles. However, the Twin City concept cannot be an offer exclusively for the displaced Kashniri Pandits but members from other communities as well will be the part and parcel of this expanded (twin) city. This proposal can be of some practical use.

Our exile or migration is undoubtedly the failure of the State. As such, our return and rehabilitation is a legal and constitutional responsibility of the State and Central Governments. Obviously, the community which has been a victim of terrorism and religious intolerance cannot return in an uncertain environment where gun is still playing its shots, fundamentalism is existing and the social structure has undergone a huge change. New generations have come up which need a deep orientation about the decades-old Kashmiri ethos. A new culture and understanding has to come up. Some appreciable normalcy has to exist for some appreciable time before the community can think of returning, till then all these exercises might prove only futile. However, while the government has to act swiftly and effectively, the community too has to ensure that it takes adequate and concrete steps for return and rehabilitation at its own level as well. While normalcy is the basis of our return, but a hypothetical normalcy, superficial calm, a political welcome and hypocritic hospitality cannot resolve the problem. Some concrete basic fundamentals are to be taken into consideration before our return. Our return at any stage or in any form will involve certain basic features like economic security, social security, political space/security etc.

The concerned governments and administrative structures have to ensure that

practical and effective packages *viz* economic, political, social, are drawn up well and honestly executed, and which do not get lost in political wrangling.

Slow Rectum Process

We may claim to be any number ranging from 3,50,000 post-1990 exiled to about 10,00,000 since 1947. It has got to be ensured as to how many are actually prepared to return on permanent basis to the Homeland, to the Satellite Townships or to the Twin City. Are all those who are well settled for decades prepared to return to the Homeland leaving their jobs and other bindings in their places of settlement for decades? Otherwise, a slow return process has virtually started but it has to be made an organized affair. Obviously there cannot be any mass movement. It has got to be a slow process. Those who are eager to return have started making a move though presently on a temporary basis only. However, a large section is prepared to move back as is evident from the number of applications and EXPRESSION OF INTEREST forms submitted in the office of the Relief Commissioner Jammu, but are waiting for the government to keep its commitment and implement its packages etc,

However, whatever be the proportion of displaced population eager to return even at this juncture, certain factors have to be taken into account. No return and rehabilitation in any form is possible without an active participation by the majority community in the entire process. And in my opinion three aspects are very essential and fundamental in this return process. These are 1) Economic security 2) Social security and 3) Political security/space and constitutional guarantees. These need to be addressed very seriously before any return process is to start.

Economic Security

Food, clothing and shelter are the basic necessities for survival. All those agencies which are eager for our return have to ensure that adequate, safe and secured economic avenues are made available because without adequate regular economic security, no return is possible. Agencies interested in our return have to ensure economic stability of the community through special packages, recruitment drives, business facilities to different sections like traders, orchardists, agriculturists, businessmen etc on long term basis. The community has to be rehabilitated and made economically independent to ensure its survival. This has to be done in relation to the growing economic level in other parts of the country.

Social Security

For safe and secured rehabilitation this economic security is to be accompanied by social security, which cannot come from any source except the local population. It is the local majority, our erstwhile neighbour, friend and colleague who alone can ensure this social security. New generations have to create a strong basis for understanding. No armed forces or security personnel can provide this social security. It needs a deep understanding of human relations and an intense interaction between the estranged communities, the estranged neighbours and colleagues. For all this a proper atmosphere has got to be created for which various agencies including the government, the displaced returning natives and majority community have to work at different levels. This social security is of paramount importance, but unfortunately no serious signals are coming from any quarter in this regard. No half hearted or casual attempts are going to help. A sustained exercise is needed. The community too has to make some contribution in this regard. Kashmiri Pandit, being essentially a secular person, has not in the past found any difficulty in living with people with different faiths but unfortunately the events of 1990 and onwards have shattered his faith and breached his trust, which needs to be restored.

Political Space/Constitutional Security

There was a time when Kashniri Pandits held very important positions in the political and administrative sphere of the State and even at the Centre. Of course it was all because of their high educational standards, caliber and efficiency and not as gratis or free gift or any body's benevolence. Gradually, he lost this stature due to discriminatory policies of the government, be it in the field of education or employment or economic empowerment and so on. Being a minuscule minority and that too now scattered and having lost this position and share, a Kashniri Pandit is fighting hard to get it

restored whether as a displaced person or otherwise. Not being a Vote Bank makes him un-represented in the State Legislature or Administrative set-up. He has a legitimate right to lay claim over his share in the administrative and political apparatus of the State. A Kashmiri Pandit needs an honourable constitutionally guaranteed political space. This can be guaranteed only under some special constitutional provisions like granting minority status, reservation of seats in the Legislature, reservation of seats in professional institutions, various boards and other set ups. His religious places, shrines, temples, educational institutions and other social institutions, and even cremation grounds, need to be protected under the law. For this the State Constitution needs to be duly amended, which can be done even before his return to the Valley. This measure will definitely ensure security and safety of his interests and help in the process of return. In this connection it may be worth mentioning here that the Kashmiri Hindu Minority Conference had submitted a memorandum to the State Government and the Central Governments as back as 1998 to amend the State Constitution to this effect and grant Minority status to the Hindus of the Valley. The demands made by the KHMC were found quite "genuine and reasonable" by the National Commission for Minorities and it had made necessary recommendations to the State and the Central Governments in this connection, but unfortunately both the Governments have maintained silence over the issue in spite of repeated demands.

Of course, the community had to leave the valley because of terrorism accompanied by barbaric and merciless killings, challenges to its respect and chastity and so on. Its very existence was threatened and survival questioned. All this was very clearly revealed by the slogans raised. The very honour and dignity of this highly civilized, intellectual community was challenged. This horrible experience is difficult to forget by those who have actually suffered it. A new healthy environment has got to be created for the return of the exiled community; a new sun has to rise over the horizon.

For the past quite some time, I had an opportunity to discuss about our return to the valley with some people. A good number showed no interest and presented some real difficulties, some imaginary and some hypothetical based on the political perceptions. A strange experience it has been which made me to think as to how many of us are really serious to go and settle back in our native land. Obviously those who have left Kashmir before 1990 exodus are not the exiled ones, those whose children are well settled outside the State, those who have disposed off their properties will no longer be interested in returning. They may be talking about their return but will they return is a big question. Of course the number of those post 1990 displaced who are eager to return might be quite small as compared to the total exiled population but their eagerness, desire to return as early as possible cannot be ignored

It is an admitted fact that both the State and the Central Governments have failed to address the genuine grievances of the displaced community. Both these governments are not serious about their return and rehabilitation. They have their own agencies to give them the feedback and they alone know what is fed to them. Perhaps Tibetan refugees and refugees from Myanmar are more important to the J&K Government to be settled in the State (In spite of Art. 370). It seems the governments are making a fun of our misery, exodus and suffering. Can we, by a strong resolution, shame these governments and declare that no Kashmiri Pandit is going back because of the failure of the Indian State and demand settlement outside the State of Jammu and Kashmir or at least where one is staying presently. If the Government feels it is not in a position to rehabilitate this small religious minority, let the community too declare that we too are not presently returning to the Valley as a protest for the failure of the State, denounce its doles and ultimately try to make itself economically independent. But keep our claim over Kashmir alive and continue to struggle. It will be a big slap on the so-called democratic face of Secular State. Can we take it all as a challenge, think on these lines, muster courage and Act? The community must draw an effective workable strategy for future. The struggle has to continue and the community has to emerge like the Jews and the exiled Parsees. ■

DEJHOOR

Avtar Krishen Trisal





Yesa Na Vidya Japo Na Dhan
Goyanam Nay Sheel Gunay Na Dharam
Tey Mirtulokey Bhav Bhar Bhoota
Manush Roopanay Mirga Chirante
"The man who does not possess education religious Scriptures, capacity for donating, attitude, Dharma, he is a burden on earth, though he posses the face of human but he is considered as animal."

The above referred couplet of Kashmiri Pandits is very common in every household which clearly indicates how much particular they are to obtain all the qualities and abilities of life.

The main question is when and where from such abilities and qualities ore obtained?

It is right from the day of birth, especially from the day when child starts sucking the milk from the breast of the mother who has a yantra (amulet) in the shape of an essential ornament on her body, known as Dejhoor, which the mother adopts on the day of her Devgoan during her marriage ceremony.

Dejhoor is not randomly worn as all other ornaments are preferred. It is obtained after performing certain religious rituals on the day of Devgoan.

Devgoan: Devgoan literarily means to invite the Devatas for offering their blessings to the people who are performing the religious rituals. The marriage ceremony of Kashmiri Pandits is mainly of three functions, *viz.* Mainz-Raat, Devgoan and Logan commonly known as Mehandi, Sant and Lanvay

Pheray in northern region of the country.

Devgoan is the first religious ritual without which no marriage or yagnopaveet ceremony can be performed. This ritual maintains its sanctity for seven days only and if within seven days *Lagan/Yagnopaveet* ritual is not performed for some reasons, ritual is to be repeated.

During the ceremony the would-be bride has to take the bath and this bath ceremony is conducted by five virgins known as Kanyas s in local dialect who are considered to be the formations of five women who have achieved the highest order of salvation among the Hindu females as per *Dharam Shastra*, namely *Ahliya, Draupadi, Tara, Sita* and *Mandodari.* Simultaneously, they are also known as five forms of the universe *viz.* Agni (fire), Prithvi (Earth), Wayu (Air), Jal (Water), and Akash (Sky). The would be bride is made to sit in a specific stellar position on a circular shaped place made on the ground, so that she can get the boon of calmness, happiness and smoothness in her life which she has to lead in future.

After obtaining the said posture, four virgins take a cloth and spread the same on the head of the bride by taking their own positions in the four corners of the specified place and the fifth virgin pours the mixture of water, flowers, rice, milk, ghee and *chandan* (sandalwood) on the head of the bride. At this stage the five virgins are considered to be in the formation of Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha and Brahma. During this process, elderly ladies sing the hymns from Rigveda which in theme are blessing for the bride and the bridegroom. After completion of the religious bath ceremony, bride wears new clothes gifted *matamaal* by her (maternals) and also wears the ornaments which are to be gifted by her parents. The bride is adorned with these ornaments usually worn by the father's sister, known as Puffi/Bhuwa.

After observing all the above mentioned formalities, the bride sits for *Pooja Archna* for obtaining the blessings of all the Gods and Goddesses and for sanctifying her ornaments and

utensils which are to be gifted by her parents. Among the ornaments Dejhoor in particular is in consideration as it becomes a powerful Yantra afterwards in respect of social/economic security as well as for building her youthfulness and providing a healthy progeny for the community.

This ceremony is performed by the *Kul Purohit* and is known as Kane Shran in Kashmiri.

Dejhoor is made of Gold and its weight depends on the economic condition of the parents of a daughter; it can only be worn with the support of a long thread made of Gold/ ordinary coloured threads which is known in Kashmiri as Atah and the lower side of Dejhoor is supported by a thick bunch of threads designed in an ornamental shape. It is also made of Gold or of different kinds of threads which are commonly known in Kashmiri as Sulma/Tilla etc. and this ornamental shaped bunch is known as Athoor.

Athoor is also an important part of the Dejhoor and has a great social and cultural significance. It is always gifted to sisters, daughters, female relations and to the female members having close friendship on each and every function they perform as a gesture of love & affection. It is always worn first in the left ear and then in the right ear.

Dejhoor has the same significance among the Kashmiri Pandit women as the Mangal Sutra has for the women of northern part of India. It is worn by making a hole in the upper part of the ear and suspended by the support of Atah and Athoor. Its length is maintained upto the breast of the female. Dejhoor, when adopted at the time of Devgoan, is worn only with the support of Atah and Athoor is provided by the in-laws when bride reaches her in-laws' house after marriage ceremony. The In-laws change also the Atah provided by the parents and replace both the items by golden Atah & Athoor.

It is not out of place to mention here that Mangal Sutra *is* abandoned after a lady becomes a widow, but Dejhoor is not abandoned even till death. In case where a widow has no male child of her own, she can abandon the Dejhoor.

Dejhoor is manufactured in a particular shape having left and right side shape as pin heads. Centre portion is flat having two holes each on upper and lower side, just to pass the Atah & Athoor through it. It is worn in both the ears separately, and is first worn in left ear. As woman is *vamkokshu* child, so Dejhoor and Athoor are always worn first in the left ear.

Vamkokshu: - A child who at the time of birth is on the left side of the womb of the mother, is known as *vamkokshu* child and it is always a female child.

Dhekshan Kokshu: - A child who at the time of birth is on the right side of the womb of the mother, is known as *Dhekshan Kokshu* child and it is always a male child.

Thus a Kashmiri Jyotshi, while preparing the Horoscope of a person always writes in the Horoscope: *Vamkokshu Kanya Jatta – Dhekshan Kokshu Putro Jatta*

Both pinheads on the left and right side religiously - denotes the presence of Lord Shiva and Shakti in the Dejhoor and Centre - flat portion is considered as *Yagya Shalla Vedi* denoting the entry of bride into the matters of family and household affairs.

Of having the presence of Lord Shiva and Shakti in the left and right side of Dejhoor, so, while sucking the milk from the breast of the mother from the day of birth, Kashmiri Pandit obtains the boon of becoming a man of renowned character in the society. This boon of Lord Shiva and Shakti is as such the main reason that Kashmiri Pandits are highly educated, having the quality of integrity, devotion to duty, having no criminal background. They are not of timid nature but are liberal. They posses affectionate nature and have the quality of adjusting themselves in any atmosphere, whether social, cultural or political. This nature of Kashmiri Pandits has been summed up by Mr. Lawerance in his book "The Valley of Kashmir" in these words:

"that Kashmiri Pandits are faithful, trustworthy, co-operative and intelligent. They are honest and have the quality of high proficiency of intelligence. All this is due to them from the mother's milk which has the blessing of Lord Shiva and Shakti through a powerful

yantra, the Dejhoor".

Dejhoor is also considered a powerful *yantra* for the maintenance of proper youth by a Kashmiri Pandit female as has been quoted by Jhon Rig in his book "Sex Impulses"

"that slight continued vibratory motions in the breast of a female increases and properly maintains her beauty and youthfulness, thus it is the main reason why the length of Dejhoor has been maintained from ear to breast."

Being the Golden ornament, Dejhoor was also considered in the olden days as social and economic security to the daughters who could not contact their parents after marriage for months together due to the unapproachable roads during the rough weather seasons, so their parents remained confident of their safety, long life and prosperity due to this *yantra*, the Dejhoor.

It is an irony, that the present day political and criminal atmosphere in the country has made the Kashmiri Pandit women forget the old traditions and

have abandoned the wearing of Dejhoor in the required manner and do not take into consideration

religious and other sanctities associated with the Dejhoor and simply

wear it for fashion purposes on special occasions and keep this *yantra*, fixed in the hairs behind their head or keep it interwoven with the braid which is not proper and thus goes against the sanctity of the Dejhoor adopted by her for particular purpose at the time of Devgoon.

If the present day Kashmiri Pandit women compare themselves with the past time women, they shall definitely feel the difference in physique, beauty and their ownselves and of their progeny. This is nothing except that they have forgotten the traditional heritage.

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GO KISS THE WORLD

Subroto Bagchi

[This is the text of a lecture on defining success, delivered by the author, then CEO, MindTree, to the class of 2006 at the IIM, Bangalore, which landed on my desk some months back. It is an inspiring piece based on the author's personal experiences in life. I have read it again and again and felt enriched. It is being reproduced hereunder for the benefit of Naad fraternity and the readers – ANK Sahib]



I was the last child of a small-time government servant, in a family of five brothers. My earliest memory of my father is as that of a District Employment Officer in Koraput, Orissa. It was, and remains as back of beyond as you can imagine. There was no electricity; no primary school nearby and water did not flow out of a tap. As a result, I did not go to school until the age of eight; I was home-schooled. My father used to get transferred every year. The family belongings fit into the back of a jeep - so the family moved from place to place and without any trouble, my Mother would set up an establishment and get us going. Raised by a widow who had come as a refugee from the then East Bengal, she was a matriculate when she married my Father.

My parents set the foundation of my life and the value system, which makes me what I am today and largely, defines what success means to me today.

As District Employment Officer, my father was given a jeep by the government. There was no garage in the Office, so the jeep was parked in our house. My father refused to use it to commute to the office. He told us that the jeep is an expensive resource given by the government - he reiterated to us that it was not "his jeep" but the government's jeep. Insisting that he would use it only to tour the interiors, he would walk to his office on normal days. He also made sure that we never sat in the government jeep - we could sit in it only when it was stationary.

That was our early childhood Lesson in governance - a lesson that corporate managers learn the hard way, some never do.

The driver of the jeep was treated with respect due to any other member of my Father's office. As small children, we were taught not to call him by his name. We had to use the suffix 'dada' whenever we were to refer to him in public or private. When I grew up to own a car and a driver by the name of Raju was appointed - I repeated the lesson to my two small daughters. They have, as a result, grown up to call Raju, 'Raju Uncle' - very different from many of their friends who refer to their family driver, as 'my driver'. When I hear that term from a school- or college-going person, I cringe.

To me, the lesson was significant - you treat small people with more respect than how you treat big people. It is more important to respect your subordinates than your superiors.

Our day used to start with the family huddling around my Mother's chulha - an earthen fire place she would build at each place of posting where she would cook for the family. There was neither gas, nor electrical stoves. The morning routine started with tea. As the brew was served, Father would ask us to read aloud the editorial page of The Statesman's 'muffosil' edition - delivered one day late. We did not understand much of what we were reading. But the ritual was meant for us to know that the world was larger than Koraput district and the English I speak today, despite having studied in an Oriya medium school, has to do with that routine. After reading the newspaper aloud, we were told to fold it neatly. Father taught us a simple lesson.

He used to say, "You should leave your newspaper and your toilet, the way you expect find it". That lesson was about showing consideration to others. Business begins and ends with that simple precept.

Being small children, we were always enamoured with advertisements in the newspaper for transistor radios - we did not have one. We saw other people having radios in their homes and each time there was an advertisement of

Philips, Murphy or Bush radios, we would ask Father when we could get one. Each time, my Father would reply that we did not need one because he already had five radios - alluding to his five sons.

We also did not have a house of our own and would occasionally ask Father as to when, like others, we would live in our own house. He would give a similar reply, "We do not need a house of our own. I already own five houses". His replies did not gladden our hearts in that instant.

Nonetheless, we learnt that it is important not to measure personal success and sense of well being through material possessions.

Government houses seldom came with fences. Mother and I collected twigs and built a small fence. After lunch, my Mother would never sleep. She would take her kitchen utensils and with those she and I would dig the rocky, white ant infested surrounding. We planted flowering bushes. The white ants destroyed them. My mother brought ash from her chulha and mixed it in the earth and we planted the seedlings all over again. This time, they bloomed. At that time, my father's transfer order came. A few neighbors told my mother why she was taking so much pain to beautify a government house, why she was planting seeds that would only benefit the next occupant. My mother replied that it did not matter to her that she would not see the flowers in full bloom. She said, "I have to create a bloom in desert and whenever I am given a new place, I must leave it more beautiful than what I had inherited".

That was my first lesson in success. It is not about what you create for yourself, it is what you leave behind that defines success.

My mother began developing a cataract in her eyes when I was very small. At that time, the eldest among my brothers got a teaching job at the University in Bhubaneswar and had to prepare for the civil services examination. So, it was decided that my Mother would move to cook for him and, as her appendage, I had to move too. For the first time in my Life I saw electricity in homes and water coming out of a tap. It was around 1965 and the country was going to war with Pakistan. My mother was having problems reading and in any case, being Bengali, she did not know the Oriya script. So, in addition to my daily chores, my job was to read her the local newspaper - end to end. That created in me a sense of connectedness with a larger world. I began taking interest in many different things. While reading out news about the war, I felt that I was fighting the war myself. She and I discussed the daily news and built a bond with the larger universe. In it, we became part of a larger reality. Till date, I measure my success in terms of that sense of larger connectedness. Meanwhile, the war raged and India was fighting on both fronts. Lal Bahadur Shastri, the then Prime Minster, coined the term "Jai Jawan, Jai Kishan" and galvanized the nation into patriotic fervour. Other than reading out the newspaper to my mother, I had no clue about how I could be part of the action. So, after reading her the newspaper, every day I would land up near the University's water tank, which served the community. I would spend hours under it, imagining that there could be spies who would come to poison the water and I had to watch for them. I would daydream about catching one and how the next day, I would be featured in the newspaper. Unfortunately for me, the spies at war ignored the sleepy town of Bhubaneswar and I never got a chance to catch one in action. Yet, that act unlocked my imagination.

Imagination is everything. If we can imagine a future, we can create it, if we can create that future, others will live in it. That is the essence of success.

Over the next few years, my mother's eyesight dimmed but in me she created a larger vision, a vision with which I continue to see the world and, I sense, through my eyes, she was seeing too. As the next few years unfolded, her vision deteriorated and she was operated for cataract. I remember, when she returned after her operation and she saw my face clearly for the first time, she was astonished. She said, "Oh my God, I did not know you were so fair". I remain mighty pleased with that adulation even till date. Within weeks of getting her sight back, she developed a corneal ulcer and, overnight, became blind in both eyes. That was 1969. She died in 2002. In all those 32 years of living with blindness, she never complained about her fate even once. Curious to know what she saw with blind eyes, I asked her once if she sees darkness. She replied, "No, I do not see darkness. I only see light even with my eyes closed". Until she was eighty years of age, she did her morning yoga everyday, swept her own room and washed her own clothes.

To me, success is about the sense of

independence; it is about not seeing the world but seeing the light.

Over the many intervening years, I grew up, studied, joined the industry and began to carve my Life's own journey. I began my life as a clerk in a government office, went on to become a Management Trainee with the DCM group and eventually found my life's calling with the IT industry when fourth generation computers came to India in 1981. Life took me places - I worked with outstanding people, challenging assignments and travelled all over the world.

In 1992, while I was posted in the US, I learnt that my father, living a retired life with my eldest brother, had suffered a third degree burn injury and was admitted in the Safderjung Hospital in Delhi. I flew back to attend to him - he remained for a few days in critical stage, bandaged from neck to toe. The Safdarjung Hospital is a cockroach infested, dirty, inhuman place. The overworked, under-resourced sisters in the burn ward are both victims and perpetrators of dehumanized life at its worst. One morning, white attending to my father, I realized that the blood bottle was empty and fearing that air would go into his vein, I asked the attending nurse to change it. She bluntly told me to do it myself. In that horrible theater of death, I was in pain and frustration and anger. Finally when she relented and came, my father opened his eyes and murmured to her, "Why have you not gone home yet?" Here was a man on his death bed but more concerned about the overworked nurse than his own state. I was stunned at his stoic self.

There I learnt that there is no limit to how concerned you can be for another human being and what the limit of inclusion is you can create.

My father died the next day. He was a man whose success was defined by his principles, his frugality, his universalism and his sense of inclusion.

Above all, he taught me that success is your ability to rise above your discomfort, whatever may be your current state. You can, if you want, raise your consciousness above your immediate surroundings. Success is not about building material comforts - the transistor that he never could buy or the house that he never owned. His success was about the legacy he left, the memetic continuity of his ideals that grew beyond the smallness of an ill-paid, unrecognized government servant's world.

My father was a fervent believer in the British Raj. He sincerely doubted the capability of the post-independence Indian political parties to govern the country. To him, the lowering of the Union Jack was a sad event. My Mother was the exact opposite. When Subhash Bose quit the Indian National Congress and came to Dacca, my mother, then a school girl, garlanded him. She learnt to spin khadi and joined an underground movement that trained her in using daggers and swords. Consequently, our household saw diversity in the political outlook of the two. On major issues concerning the world, the Old Man and the Old Lady had differing opinions.

In them, we learnt the power of disagreements, of dialogue and the essence of living with diversity in thinking. Success is not about the ability to create a definitive dogmatic end state; it is about the unfolding of thought processes, of dialogue and continuum.

Two years back, at the age of eighty-two, Mother had a paralytic stroke and was lying in a government hospital in Bhubaneswar. I flew down from the US where I was serving my second stint, to see her. I spent two weeks with her in the hospital as she remained in a paralytic state. She was neither getting better nor moving on. Eventually I had to return to work. While leaving her behind, I kissed her face. In that paralytic state and a garbled voice, she said,

"Why are you kissing me, go kiss the world." Her river was nearing its Journey, at the confluence of life and death, this woman who came to India as a refugee, raised by a widowed Mother, no more educated than high school, married to an anonymous government servant whose last salary was Rupees Three Hundred, robbed of her eyesight by fate and crowned by adversity, was telling me to go and kiss the world!

Success to me is about Vision. It is the ability to rise above the immediacy of pain. It is about imagination. It is about sensitivity to small people. It is about building inclusion. It is about connectedness to a larger world existence. It is about personal tenacity. It is about giving back more to life than you take out of it. It is about creating extra-ordinary success with ordinary lives.

Thank you very much; I wish you good luck and God's speed.

Go! Kiss the world !!!

TOO BIG FOR YOUR BOOTS

Archana Kaul



"Too Big For Your Boots". I knew it was an Idiom but I never went too deep to understand it. Recently I observed and tried to relate it with few examples and found that this Idiom does have a lot of meaning. Dictionary meaning says *"behaving as if you were more important than you really are"*. Few say it means being arrogant. To me it looks like having inflated perception of your own importance. You start feeling you are better than others, you are different than others, you start getting superior complexity, you feel you are very important and try to boast your importance.

When do you start feeling you are more important, when you get what you do not deserve, you get what you have not thought about, you have a fear and believe it is not going to last for long, you know it was not yourpotential.

People of such category have short vision, and since they have a fear of even losingit, they want to enjoy this false power. What is this false power, it can be a promotion you got, you know you were not deserving it, wealth you got you know was not created by you, authority you got, but the conviction was not there. Small wins and gains which makes you think you have become a celebrity. Success starts transforming your behavior. You are less likely to learn from the people around, you start losing respect from others. You get attracted to the people who are in power or have authority and see that as a ladder for your success. You start living an egocentric life. One more thing of boasting such behaviour is that your value system is weak, you have no idea about your own capability, you are short sighted in your vision, you have been deprived of respect, your acceptability within your family and friends have been low, you share false relationships, so you do everything that attracts attention and makes you feel better than others.

If you are modest, people love you for your modesty, your thoughts and statements are valued, you are respected irrespective of your titles, wealth, empires. People come forward to be connected with you in some shape or form. People do not forget to greet you. People find you through facebook, twitter, blogs etc. People try to develop the virtues you have and try to follow your value system. You are a pleasant company and people like being around you. You earn a real and overstaying respect of others.

Some of the modest people like APJ Abdul Kalam, Amitabh Bachan, Sachin Tendulkar, all have and are exhibiting the virtues like humility, modesty. We see them all the time attached to their basics. These people are respected as individuals. Not forgetting their roots, exhibiting same behaviour, not letting success change their fundamentals, displaying the values all the times. They live by their own examples, their simplicity and humbleness make a special place in the hearts of the people. Unknowingly they get lot of respect and love from the people around.

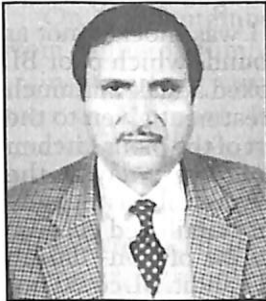
I was watching one of the KBC episode (Year 2014 series), anchored by Amitabh Bachan. One of the contestant on the hot seat said to Amitabh, "why do you work hard, you have done enough in your life, you should take rest at least in night". Amitabh with his modestly replied, I have to work hard and be awake because of the love and respect I get from people. People are waiting for me on my blogs and twitter, if I am late in responding, people get worried and start tweeting, sir where are you, why are you late today, is all well with you…and so on. I cannot make people wait, ***is this not an example of modesty.***

On contrary since you do not have modesty and you do not know how to get there, you try to misuse your power of wealth and position. You run after honor, you distance yourself from dignity unknowingly. You will always go for things that may be not right but will win accolades for you. But modest and virtuous people shun such behavior. You need to live a life where there is no greed to become big, no behavior exhibiting arrogance, not reflecting untrue picture of yours, else for sure you earn a permanent title, "TOO BIG FOR YOUR BOOTS"

[The writer lives in Anekant Apartments, Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi]

VEGETARIANS – "A NEGLECTED SECTOR"

Shiban Khaibri



Incredible as it may sound, vegetarians are fast becoming a rather neglected and a problematic sector, if sectoral classification fits into the issue *vis – a – vis,* those who are on the other side, *ie;* fond of relishing and eating meat and thus comparatively getting a bit more of saturated fats, some amount of added cholesterol, high animal protein and the like. Hosts, especially in our community's marriage ceremonies, "Receptions" in particular, are seemingly taking added interest in ensuring that non–veg dishes are cooked up to the mark, sizzling with the aroma and required condiments to qualify for being mouth watering just on sight and are totally to the taste and satisfaction of the guests. After what most of us call "migration" instead of exodus from the valley, we have excelled in making our marriage ceremonies more and more expensive and, of course, on most of the occasions making a departure from our ethos only with an intent to show off our "status" and "standing". No problem, then if we tend to be on a spree of adding more rituals and events to these ceremonies and just not only more varieties of non-vegetarian items to the "conservative" menu. Some, rather most of us, put forward different theories and alibis for being more and more non-veg oriented, if it be called so. The cooks, therefore, are usually given special instructions to be careful about the non-veg cuisine as compared to the vegetarian ones. We, in exile, still live in an air of competition to show being better placed financially and high in "status" among ourselves through ostentatious spending on marriage ceremonies and yet forget to having responded to our getting hounded out from our hearths and homes, at least by being simpler in such celebrations. This scenario of our exiled community in the present day of fastest communication has travelled beyond our realms to expression of envy, if not prejudice against us. That does not augur well for us on the whole.

There can ostensibly be no peculiar additions in the form of varieties in vegetarian dishes excepting the conventional items to match the "royalties" of the non- vegetarian ones. This writer has had many an encounter of facing unintentional neglect *vis-a-vis* the other side as I, fortunately or unfortunately, happen to be a total vegetarian in the puritan sense. Of course, a very thin minuscule minority spotted by me on such occasions does give me "moral support" to brave any unintentional embarrassment of the sorts in our mutual interest. Usually, on being spotted among the negligible minority of the vegetarians, I, of course draw added attention, that of a seeming acclaim from the host, but when a beeline of waiters with plates of *kabab,* fried fish, chicken tikka, roasted chicken, fish pakoras and other varieties get served as starters before meals with cold drinks followed by *Kehwa,* there is no match, not even in the least, of the veg. items for the "rebels" like me because such a negligible minority would either be considered rebels or crazy or an inconvenient block to be looked after. The situation gets sensitive when on most such occasions, guests are honoured to be "sent into high spirits" before serving dinner or a staggered late lunch. Whatever, however, is served to the vegetarians — at best a couple of item of cheese or potatoes, is suspected by some to have been fried in the same oil - in the same pan and handled with the same spatula where the "royalties" have had the privilege of going first. In a way, as many non-veg. friends have confided in me, being a vegetarian among the majority of non-vegetarians, could amount to partaking of some thing in some form or the other, from their cuisine and in their considered views, it was better that I reviewed the decision taken by me in 1988 which I scrupulously am adhering to irrespective of "incentives" or "neglects".

Many ask me the reasons of having chosen the "extreme side", whether due to any physical problem, whether to craving for better health, due to some spiritual or moral considerations, sharing concern for environment or the sufferings of the animals, for being on safer side as many sheep slaughtered are suspected to be carrying some infections or bacteria and so on. Rarely do I share the "secret" behind the switchover to a cent percent vegetarian diet. Sharing it with the readers of this esteemed magazine herein, however, is done without any prejudice or bias whatsoever

against the non- vegetarians as the choice of an individual falls exclusively in his or her own independent sovereign domain.

It was in February 1988, when to celebrate Shivratri, I had travelled all the way nearly 1200 Kms from my place of posting in a remote area of Eastern U.P, on a week's leave to Srinagar, that nearing my residence, I noticed a neighbour of mine, a college teacher by profession with a swollen face and his left eye area bandaged conspicuously. For brevity and convenience, I shall be referring him as Mr. B. L. in the following lines. Since I was in an auto rickshaw, it being the evening time, and my residence only at a stone's throw, I thought to get the firsthand information about his predicament from my family and other friends rather than doing a formality by asking him all about it there on the road side. The worrying suspense was soon over when I learnt that there was some quarrel between him and a butcher wherein he had a providential escape from loosing his left eye due to a severe blow he had received at the spot during the process of being brutally roughed up by the butcher.

I came to know later that Mr. B L had gone to purchase some mutton from a familiar mutton seller who fairly well knew all his regular customers of the area, including Mr. BL. Since the important festival of Mahashivratri was only a few days away, there were some more K.P. customers like him at the shop, silently waiting for their turn. One KP gentleman had to purchase half a kilo of mutton for which he gave out a hundred Rupee note and got back just Rs. 20, much to his astonishment. He very politely asked the mutton seller as to why he was returning only Rs.20 and also at what rate was a kilo charged for? "Take this mutton '*Dalya Batta*' and get lost," was the reply given to the shopper. The meek, gentle, peace loving, submissive but fond of mutton Pandit Ji, obeyed the diktat scrupulously. Not coming to terms with the arbitrarily increased price of the mutton charged by the seller, especially on the occasion of ensuing Shivratri, BL very gently took up courage and asked him as to why did he not tell the Pandit Ji about the rate of the mutton per kilo, as it was his turn then to get the thing. No sooner did he utter these words than the mutton seller menacingly pounced upon him and gave him a thrashing for daring to ask the "forbidden question", punctuated with calling him the filthiest of names. Mr. B L reportedly got a blow under his left eye, he bled profusely and short of losing his eye permanently, he was in a bad shape and was rushed to hospital. Not only this, the utensil which he had brought along to take back home the chopped mutton, was contemptuously and in rage thrown by the butcher across the road landing in a filthy drain.

For reasons not known, I was shocked not as much on the bruises and wounds which poor BL had received in the unprovoked attack inasmuch as I felt very badly for the treatment given to the utensil which was a pious part of the pious kitchen of the victim and fondly used every day in the household. The sanctity of the utensil was violated by the butcher and its owner humiliated because he was a peaceful, gentle, a bit of non- daring creature, known as Kashmiri Pandit. BL could not do anything except nursing his wounds, forgetting the episode of "misunderstanding" and "miscommunication" in the larger interests of what some called "Kashmiriyat". Kashmiriyat was then in veiled hiccups and very few could diagnose the severity of the disease which later in 1990, died a tragic death when we, the Kashmiri Pandits, were declared *persona-non-grata* by the powerful fundamentalists and hatemongers from within the valley and outside and hounded out to "cleanse" the place of which we are the indigenous inhabitants. Those in charge of the political dispensation in the State then, responsible for our exodus, have till date not been identified, named and shamed even mildly not to the extent of the manner as Narendra Modi has all these 11 years been made to face from the Hindu pseudo-secularists, "proprietors" of Human Rights, the so-called intellectuals and those writers who excel in and get prominence by Modi-bashing and calling those political parties who speak ALSO for Hindus as "communalists" and "Fascists" *et-al.*

Reverting to the subject, hearing all the heart rending incident with tears in eyes and indignation running rife, I took a vow, there and then, never to taste meat or any non-vegetarian dish, never to even purchase any, as perhaps the lust for it was largely responsible for the ordeal which BL had to go through and the resultant humiliation of getting beaten up for no fault of his and also the utensil carried by BL getting defiled at the hands of the butcher. The "moral" of this story is that while I turned a strict vegetarian only and only on account of that incident, the Late BL continued to be staunch lover of mutton like before.

[Shiban Khaibri is senior journalist and a social activist and lives at Paloura, Jammu]

WHICH KASHMIR TO RETURN TO ???

Ashok Manwati

On 15th September, 2013, while travelling from Delhi to Mumbai, my co-passengers in the train were final year Law students on a study tour to Mumbai. Just to know about their interests so as to understand their perceptions of and expectations from life, I started a discussion in general. During the discussion they introduced to me a fellow student from Kashmir, whom they described as a very studious student. Obviously we spoke in Kashmiri. During the normal discourse he had a very hearty laugh on which his fellow students were surprised because according to them "he never laughs". Perhaps his reason of laughing was that he was speaking to a fellow Kashmiri after a long time, that too a Kashmiri Pandit – an unknown entity for him, because he was post - 1990 born. Later, I read three articles written by him in some newspapers on net. Yes, his writings revealed an intelligent, studious student seeking answers.

At the very outset, he invited me to return to Kashmir – my ancestral home since times immemorial – the place where I have my Culture, Soul and Solace. My DNA is made of the "*mitti* of Kashmir".

I wrote back to him : "I miss the breeze that I don't find anywhere in the world, the fragrance for which I long, the whistling Cedars, the fragrant Pines, the standing Poplars in soothing silence, the batting Willows, simmering Lakes, life bestowing meadows, the grandiose snowy Himalayan peaks that talk to skies, mesmerizing yellow mustard fields, rising Sun over the lush green Rice fields, the enchanting golden glow of autumn leaves, the low flying smokes of the burning Chinar leaves, the songs of *Posh-Nool*, the walks through the meandering edges of fields, playing cricket on the frozen Dal Lake, and, above all, a society that was not meant to betray or kill, where there was a respect for women of all sects of society; where an extreme that would happen is just to throw a *"Kangri"* on each other in a worst fight, without even thinking of using a small knife.

But I fail to answer one big question, that you may find answer for me. Which Kashmir would I like to return to? Kashmir where my neighbour's Haj would not be accepted till he ensured that his immediate neighbour – right and left (irrespective of his beliefs) – and his near relations were having comfortable two time meals peacefully, OR to the Kashmir where persons not practicing Islam (practicing is different to believing) are *Kafirs* and worth the prize of Kill? In Kashmir, it has been a practice from the very beginning to respect the religious places of all Hindus as well as Muslims".

Here, I recollect what was conveyed to me last year through a reliable source. When the founder of a well known and about 50-year old Charitable Trust of Kashmir went on Haj pilgrimage, he was wonderstruck when he saw a dream wherein it was conveyed to him that his Haj would be accepted only if he helped a particular Kashmiri Pandit in his neighbourhood in Kashmir as he was engaged in undisclosed charity service of helping destitute widows with his meagre salary without the knowledge of even his wife. The person did so, and was amazed to know the work being done by this neighbour for years, that was revealed only after conveying the dream.

Because of the common ancestry, Kashmiri people generally co-existed peacefully till 1985, respecting the Culture, Religion and Rituals of everyone.

The underlying questions need objective answers, not subjective emotional outbursts.

Allah has made one Water, one Oxygen and one Earth for humans to live. HE has not

decreed any one to destroy the precious Gift of Allah that is LIFE. We humans are not Shakespearean wanton boys to kill butterflies at our sweet will. If religion would be the answer to sectarian strifes, then there would be peace in Syria, Sudan, Egypt, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc. But Alas! that is not the truth. Truth is: it is purely a means of politics for the people involved in this unholy practice.

He asked, What about Kashmir Problem status past 1947?

What I told him in reply, I thought let me share it with the entire Kashmiri community, because it is concerning us all – Muslims as well Pandits. Through this I intended to reach the younger generation of Kashmir.

"Kashmir has historically been on its own like other 550 plus states of India, especially prior to 13th century, though it has had tremendous cultural, spiritual and literary impact on whole of India and the surrounding geographic regions. It had its own rulers and kings. The part of the history that cannot be denied, howsoever one may wish, is the fact we have a common ancestry, and past 13th century Muslim invasions more or less brought Kashmir under Indian geographic and political domain for reasons of governance. Kashmir suffered more than it prospered under these tyrannical rulers like rest of India, influencing the socio-cultural and spiritual fabric of this entire region. Amritsar Treaty of 18th Century (signed on March, 16, 1846, under the signatures of Gulab Singh, Hardinge, Currie and Lawrence), brought Kashmir under the rule of Gulab Singh, which later passed on to Maharaja Hari Singh till the eventful 1947, when Pakistan virtually forced Hari Singh and Sheikh Abdullah to accede to India under the impact of war. It was not a conspiracy by India as generally propagated. I have not given a chronological history of events here because that is not the topic; only a brief summary has been penned down.

In the U N Resolution on Kashmir, the first and foremost condition is that Pakistan has to vacate occupied areas before conducting Plebiscite. But, a billion dollar question – will Pakistan be able to do so when it has not only made demographic changes in the occupied areas but also ceded a large portion to China?

It was and is the political expediency of the rulers of the state to propagate divisive politics as in rest of India, in fact most parts of the developing and developed world. In this game of claiming the cake, bludgeoning of masses by these so called well wisher-ruling elite is a part of self-believed fair game on the checker board of politics, snatching your and my freedom, and distributing death, mayhem and destruction in place of peaceful progress. Ever thought, where are the children of these so called leaders who often instigate people on one or the other pretext, why don't they lead from the front? Yes, they are busy studying and making their life at your and my cost of life, in safe and secure havens – what rationally they should be doing."

Here again, I recall an incident about a decade ago. While travelling from Jammu to Delhi, a driver with BSF in Kashmir for many years, and was now travelling to Assam – his new place of posting, was desperately and irritatingly trying to force his conversation that militancy in Kashmir will never cease for the reasons that money greases palms of every Tom Dick and Harry – local goons, militants, chut - bayas, mafia from both sides of LOC, even some administrators. As a mute witness, sitting in his vehicle, he had observed these people collecting in same school grounds to share the booty. He even said that he had been a witness to at least two suicides, who were scholars sent from Pakistan but were frustrated once they saw the reality of progressive Kashmir on this side. They committed suicide because they believed that their return to Pakistan would also mean death for them.

We organized a seminar on terrorism in NCR area about a decade ago. What I firmly believe today that surprised and startled me then was when a then Cabinet rank Minister of Uttar Pradesh observed that Terrorism has

become a tool of politics.

Pakistan is unable to sustain and secure itself, its own people. What will it do to Kashmiris? Treat them like second class citizens like Muhajirs post 1947 – those Muslims that went to Pakistan during 1947 partition. What is the development in POK? Any idea? Watch a BBC Documentary on the subject made about a decade ago. What happened to the trade between POK and Kashmir? What is the volume of trade and what is the level of trust between the traders of two sides of L O C? How many people travel in the buses now between POK and Kashmir?

Independent Kashmir will be an eyesore for America as it will thrust its hold to have a closer view on neighbouring China, Russia and India. And how will the Kashmiri culture, society and economy be benefitted in the geographically locked entity under such an arrangement?

Why did Kashmiri Muslims hand over thousands of Mujahids (Pakistani infiltrators) to Indian Army in 1965, that were present in almost all mohallas and villages then? Obviously, they must have had some solid reason.

And, why has revered Maulana Mahmood Madni spoken what he said recently after Muzffarnagar riots. Just to remind, he said, "if Hindus, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, Parsees, Jains etc. live peacefully amongst themselves, why cannot Muslims live? In the name of Jehad, terrorism has done great harm to Islam. Today Islamic countries are poor and backward inspite of hundred percent Muslim population. India has given us so much."

Yes, I will struggle shoulder to shoulder with my fellow Kashmiris for a progressive and peaceful development, creating employment avenues, education, justice based on dignified human approach for the diverse colourful mosaic of Kashmir, but definitely not for uni-religious society based on dictates of fatwas.

What we Kashmiris have to understand is that we are easily carried away by slogans and arguments that add to the mayhem, because we all are simple and faithful. Being extremely religious, the fear of beyond and unknown is exploited to hilt by Asarams and Geelanis. Let us relearn Nund-Reshi, Shamas Faqir, Swatchh Kraal, Lal Ded, and more recently Ahad Saab (within whose precincts guns failed to function). Then only can we re-focus ourselves for the betterment of our future.

Till then not only Kashmiri Pandits but even those Kashmiri Muslims would not like to return to Kashmir who have assessed the living conditions on the two sides of Banihal tunnel.

Progress comes in peaceful times. That is possible only when we all understand the dimensions of the problems and limitations around. The water that has flown down the Jhelum over the years cannot go back in time, *Kish-Mish* cannot recycle itself into grapes, populations that moved from Keran to Karan Nagar, from Fateh Kadal to Rawalpora or Rambagh cannot afford to re-live and go back in time. Life and times must move forward.

It was 04:15 am of 23rd Sept, 2013, and the following song was playing on FM Radio from the Bollywood film "The Burning Train":

"Pal Do Pal Ka Sath Hamara,
Pal Do Pal Ke Yarane Hain,

Yeh Pal Khushi Ki Jannat Hai,
Is Pal Me Jee Le Deewane,

Aaj Ki Khushiyaan Ek Hakikat,
Kal Ki Khushiyaan Afsane Hain.

Jhoom Jab Tak Dadhkanoo Mein Jaan Hai,
Jhoomna Hi Zindagi Ki Shaan Hai,
Awal Aakhir Har Koi Anjaan Hai...

Gumshudha Khushyoon Pe Kyun Hairan Hai,
Waqt Lote Iska Kab Imkaan Hai.

[Email : ashokmanvati@gmail.com]

DECEMBER 1 RENDEZVOUS WITH NaMo

Ajay Khosa

We humans gather experiences in the form of events and incidents of life and these in turn formulate our opinion which eventually leads to conduct. Being a part of this exiled community, our lives have been eventful thus experiences have never eluded us. They are part and parcel of our lives and have shaped our conduct to a larger extent. Today again was a day of yet another experience and shaping, and I must acknowledge that I had my set of prejudices connected with this rally and they were heavily loaded in favour of Shri Narender Modi, whom, in the succeeding lines, I shall address as my hero or more preferably NaMo.

I was accompanied by a person younger than my age, but much more seasoned and experienced than anyone double my age. He has been my mentor on issues concerning our community, but I am a kind of entity who believes in taking a firsthand experience on most of the issues. I have done it in past, am going to do this today and in future as well. Having said this, I still hold the views and opinion of this person very seriously, however, today I decided to put his views on rally at a back burner.

As the event progressed, I could see the local BJP leaders raising their voice and concern for a horde of issues miring our state, issues regarding rights, plights, agony of west Pakistan refugees, Shias of Kargil, Boarder migrants and people, Ladhakis, and Yes, I could also hear them speak about the gruesome murder of Sarabjeet Singh and Chamail Singh orchestrated by Pakistan in their jails. The lacklustre response of the State govt. and those at the helm in Centre came under severe criticism. Leaders, one after the other, were boasting about the presence of 5000 members of Muslim fraternity from the valley. Amidst all this and further swelling of the stadium, the chants and roars for NaMo were growing louder and louder. I was wondering, how could any of the leaders on the dais forget to utter even a word about my exiled community which has lived amongst them for the last 23 years and who currently comprise a very important constituent of the Jammu society. My belief was thinning as the leaders one by one were culminating their address. Strange thoughts were creeping in and I was thinking if the sacrifices made by all the mentioned communities were so great and profound that an easy miss could be given to this exiled community. I was repeatedly training my mind with the thought that these leaders after all have to leave something for NaMo to deliberate upon. They are purposely giving a miss to the plight and pathos of my community, since, I had always believed that Pandits and their plight is a trump card in the hands of this nation, and best is always used with care and caution.

I had now pinned my hopes upon my hero to deliver not on Pandits but pass a terse message to all those who are hell bent to bleed India through thousand cuts, to balkanise India, to terrorise India and finally to those who blackmail India by keeping the bogey of separatism alive. After some while my wait came to an end, and we could see NaMo suddenly appearing on the dais with Shri Rajnath Singh. The euphoria and the ecstasy of the crowd was a sight which we always desire to behold in our imagination. People seemed to have gone crazy and wild. This ecstasy had enveloped me as well, and chants and yells came out of my conscious mind.

As it took a while to settle down things, I again got submerged in my thoughts. Lolz! Here is my hero, the hero for whom, I had created an event on face book and made sure it reached far and wide on social media. The hero who I believe has that innate capability to change the destiny of this nation, and putting it in the words of NaMo, transform this nation from the state of beggar-hood to Better-hood.

My cherished desire to listen to our future PM had to rest for a while as the party President Rajnath Singh stood up to deliver a customary speech. I found a resonance of the same speech delivered by local BJP leaders. He too boasted off about the presence of valley Muslims, was very concerned about the voting rights of West Pakistan and POK refugees, discussed at length Sarabjeet and Chamail Singh. And yes, in the footnotes he did mention something about the rehabilitation of Pandits, but in a very cursory

manner, seemed as if he had been advised or rather tutored about not dabbling in detail about this languishing community. Though my confidence was thinning and my conscious mind was ringing alarm bells in my sub-conscious, yet, I had pinned great hopes with the man of the moment, our hero, our NaMo to speak on issues very dear to the heart of a nationalist.

And then, our wishes were granted, NaMo stood up to deliver his address to a vast and mammoth gathering. NaMo along expected lines and in a manner befitting a person aspiring to be the PM of India covered all the aspects and issues affecting the common man, economy, unemployment, inflation, our weak-kneed approach to our ever aggressive neighbours. Everything, I must say, but I could also see the same resonance of speech which I saw in previous speakers. NaMo too showed his concerns about Shia's of Kargil, people of Ladakh, West Pakistan and Pok refugees, Sarabjit, Chamail Singh, Gujjars, and yes! a new addition - Saba, the sister of Omar Abdullah, who lost her rights of inheritance after marrying to a non-state actor. Oops! A non-state subject!

Trying to keep myself fixed and glued to chair, and desirous of hearing at least the same 'passing remark' about the plight and pathos of Pandits, I was shocked instead by something which I least expected from my hero. NaMo started emulating Vajpayee ji by branding his formula as the only solution to K-issue. He went on to say, *Insaaniyat* (Humanity), *Jamhooriyat* (Democracy), and *Kashmiryat*, the three pillars upon which the resolution of Kashmir has to be reached. Lolz! was I hearing this farce notion again. The word *Kashmiryat*, reminiscent of torture, pain, heart-breaks, genocide and perpetual exiled state of this community. And my hero was trying to make me believe there is no other way out. That the Pandits must again be held up at the altar of *Kashmiryat* and sacrificed to uphold the Indian nationhood in Kashmir, and to further upon the plans of holding on to Kashmir through the sacrifices of Pandits. No way! This resilient Batta in me was feeling humiliated, let down, and completely shattered. Now, I was reading the events of the rally in continuity of what Indian state has been doing post Independence in Kashmir and with Kashmiri Pandits.

I again feel it pertinent to mention that I being a Kashmiri Pandit had attached least personal (read community) with this rally, since, whatever I was doing was in a state of selflessness; however, being a mortal, I too now began to think, when sacrifices, plight, pain of other communities can find mention in the speeches of all the leaders, why this humble Pandit is always ignored and forgotten. Why the sacrifices made by Pandits to uphold the Indian Nation and Indian state in Kashmir amidst all odds, humiliations, conversion, mass murders and exiles are so conveniently brushed under the carpet and ignored. Are Pandits so unwanted?

But then, I got the answers from the same conscious mind which until now sitting on the edge of chair to stand up in endorsement and affirmation of what NaMo said. Buddy! You are not a vote bank, thus completely dispensable and unwanted. But again as they say, it is the poor which keeps his conscience alive. My sub conscious mind jolted my conscious one and delivered a verdict.

Let this be the last sacrifice this humble Pandit is making, Let us not let NaMo down. Let us still act selflessly caring least if NaMo remembers us or not. Still as staunch nationalists least caring about the self of our community, we will selflessly continue to work as his soldiers. The lines of Pablo Neruda fit in the milieu of things, "Though this be the last pain that she makes me suffer; and these the last lines I write for her".

[khosa.ajay@gmail.com]

STOP PRESS

➢ Shri Madhusudan Lal Shakdher, brother of Sarvashri P. N. Shakdher and Girdhari Lal Shakdher and uncle of Shri Sunil Shakdher (Pamposh Enclave) passed away on December 30, 2013 at New Delhi.

➢ Shri Moti Lal Mattoo, brother of Sarvashri Makhan Lal Mattoo, Madan Lal Mattoo and Manohar Mattoo (originally from Rainawari, Srinagar) breathed his last at Pune on December 31, 2013. He was the brother-in-law of Shri P. L. Kaul Sahib and Shri P. N. Wali (Vasundhara Enclave, Delhi)

Our heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families.

NAAD EDUCATION FOLIO

Compiled and composed by Vijay Kashkari



Counselling

More on JEE 2014

A few reasons, why to opt JEE main 2014 online

Choosing online mode of JEE Main 2014 will actually cost you less. The cost of offline mode is Rs.1000 whereas online mode is Rs.600. So, if you are thinking of saving some money and use your computer skills, you should actually opt for online mode. The second reason is that It saves time. You would save the hassles of shading boxes with pencil or pen and actually save a lot of time in the online mode. Offline mode consumes a lot of time in shading and filling answers while answers in JEE Main 2014 online mode is just a click away. In the online mode, you can actually edit and review your answer at any point which will give you the freedom to surf between the answers. Questions may be marked as well for review later on. An important reason is that, there are a lot more online JEE Main 2014 canters than offline canter. Candidates can choose between 9, 11, 12, 19 April as online exam date according to their convenience. There are less chances of missing questions in online JEE Main 2014 mode, candidates are less likely to skip questions since different colour schemes would be used to attempted questions, questions for review and un-attempted questions.

JEE Main 2014 Making Positive Changes

The Board has decided to upload a real-time online mock test for practice so that aspirants can practice it before applying for online exam. According to the CBSE the online sample tests will provide an illustration of actual JEE Main 2014 test and candidates will be comfortable in deciding whether they want to go for online exam or offline exam. CBSE has offered the online exam option in 235 cities/ towns for JEE Main 2014 online exam. The capacity for the online exam will be about 5 lakh candidates. Earlier this exam was named as AIEEE.

CBSE experimented with the online mode in 2011 when candidates registered for online exam were around 1.25 lakh. In the year 2013 the number of online candidates was around 1.75 lakh. More than 14 lakh aspirants are expected to register for the test this year. To make sure that the examination centres are more easily accessible by the candidates, CBSE has offered online exam in as many as 235 cities/ towns of the country. This is in addition to the 85 cities/ towns which will have centres for offline (pen-paper) mode of the exam. The thought behind this expansion is to provide the exam centre as near to candidates as possible. The final objective of the CBSE is to make the JEE Main exam completely online exam though students may find it difficult as it is a new method. The power cut is an issue and there is no safeguard against the power cuts, which occur at the time of the examination. The candidates do not have question paper for the reference.

ADMISSION ALERT

Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) - 2014

The Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) this year would be conducted by the Gujarat National Law University (GNLU) and the scheduled date for CLAT 2014 is Sunday, 11th May, 2014. GNLU has introduced this year online application and later centralized online Counselling, to help thousands of parents and students in securing admission, saving money, time and efforts. Details will be available on website www.clat.ac.in in the month of January, 2014.

MMU Mullana 2014 Application Form Released

Maharishi Markandeshwar University, Mullana has released the MMU Mullana 2014 Application Form for admissions into undergraduate engineering courses. Candidates who want to take B. Tech as higher education have to fill the MMU 2014 Application Form to apply for the admissions. Admissions into MMU Mullana will be conducted on the basis of JEE Main 2014 and candidates are also required to furnish the details of JEE Main 2014 AIR in the Application Form of MMU 2014. The form has to be downloaded from the official website of MMU Mullana and filled correctly in a neat handwriting.

BITS Pilani releases the BITSAT 2014 Online Application Form

BITS Pilani has released the BITSAT 2014 Online Application Form for candidates to fill in order to apply for engineering undergraduate courses. BITSAT 2014 Application Form can be filled online on the official website of BITS Pilani. Candidates are required to qualify the examination to become eligible for further admission process. The application would be available till 15 February

2014.

COMEDK 2014 Exam Date Released

The Association of medical and dental colleges as well as the engineering colleges has decided on the COMEDK 2014 exam date; it has been scheduled for 11 May 2014.

IIST 2014 Admissions

Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology (IIST) has released notification regarding admissions for session 2014-15 in its undergraduate engineering courses. The total number of seats for the session 2014-15 in IIST 2014 Admissions would be 156. Distribution of seats as per courses is as follows: Aerospace Engineering – 60 Avionics – 60 Physical sciences – 36. Candidates aspiring to take admission in IIST 2014 would have to attempt the JEE Main 2014 Exam, conducted by CBSE and qualify for JEE Advanced 2014, conducted by IIT Kharagpur. Open the official site: www.iist.ac.in and browse to registration link. Important dates will be published in April, 2014.

University of Hyderabad Admission- 2014-15

The University offers facilities for Postgraduate, Advanced PG/PG Diploma, 5 -Year Integrated Master's Degree Courses, and Research Studies in several major areas in Sciences, (including Medical Sciences, Engineering Sciences & Technology), Humanities, Social Sciences, Performing Arts, Fine Arts, Communication and Management Studies. Some of the courses are; M.A. (5-year Integrated) Courses in Social Sciences – (10 Semesters) Economics, History, Political Science, Sociology and Anthropology, Integrated M.Sc./Ph.D. (2 to 7 years) and Biotechnology. Last Date to Deposit downloaded form is 03-01-2013. As proposed by the UGC, two supernumerary seats have been created for admitting the students coming from the state of Jammu & Kashmir under MHRD's special scholarship scheme.

NCHMCT JEE 2014

National Council for Hotel Management & Catering Technology has announced the dates about NCHMCT admission 2014. Admission shall be based on marks obtained by the candidate in All India (Written Test) JEE-examination to be held on 26 April 2014(Saturday).Application Form online is available from 05 December 2013 to 07 April 2014. Last Date for receipt of filled-in form is 07 April 2014 (Monday). One seat (Supernumerary) in each Central and State Government affiliated IHM is provided for Registered Kashmiri Migrants. Such applicants shall have to qualify the JEE-2014.

ICSI releases important dates for 2014, introduces online applications

The Institute of Company Secretaries of India has released the schedule for all the cut-off dates for the year 2014. ICSI has also informed that from 1 January, 2014, all procedures such as admission/ registration applications, examination enrolment applications, applications for claiming paper-wise exemptions, applications for Registration *De novo* / extension of registration etc. shall be done through online mode only.Applying for paper-wise exemption on the basis of qualification for June 2014 examination is 31 January, 2014 and applying for Registration *De Novo* / Extension of registration (for June 2014 exam) is 20 February, 2014.

DTE, Mumbai Admission Management

Online Common Entrance Test for Admission to first year of Two years by DTE, Mumbai will be conducted online on Saturday, 15 – 03 – 2014 & Sunday, 16 – 03 – 2014. The detailed notification will be issued in the month of January, 2014.

VITEEE 2014 Application Form Released

VITEEE 2014 Application Form has been released by VIT University on 4 December 2013. Candidates can fill VITEEE 2014 Application Form in online mode as well as offline mode. VITEEE 2014 Application Form can be acquired from Vellore, Chennai campus as well as designated sale centres in offline mode or candidates can access official website of VIT University to fill the Application Form: www.vit.ac.in. VITEEE 2014 Exam would be held in online mode from 9 April to 20 April 2014. The university offers 19 Undergraduate, 34 Postgraduate and 2 Integrated Programmes and 4 Research programmes. In addition to full-time/part-time Ph.D., M.S.(BY RESEARCH) Degrees in Engineering and Management Disciplines, Ph.D., M.Phil in Sciences and Languages, Integrated Ph.D. programmes also offered for engineering disciplines in selected schools. Last Date for issue/receipt of Application Forms is Friday, 28th February 2014 for UG Programmes.

Bharati Vidyapeeth University notifies Admission

Bharati Vidyapeeth University, a deemed university of repute, has notified its Admission schedule. For filling application online, visit admission website www.bharatividyapeethuniversity.net and www.bvuniversity.edu.in. For filling application by post contact to - The admission office in person or by Post at The Admission Office, Bharati Vidyapeeth University, Bharati Vidyapeeth Bhawan, 2nd Floor Common Entrance Test (CET

Dept) LBS Marg, Pune - 4110130. Applications are also available, Bharati Vidyapeeth University and Institute at Pune, New Delhi, Mumbai, Sangli, Kolhapur, Solapur, Karad, Palus and Kadegaon. Detailed address is available on the Contact us page.

Education News Bytes

B-schools unhappy with UGC's move to control tech education

Over 300 B-schools in the country are planning to protest against the University Grants Commission's (UGC) plan to take over technical education. Last week, the UGC, in confirmation with the Supreme Court's ruling, drafted guidelines for approval of new courses, setting up of new technical institutions and closure of the old ones and all other regulatory steps. This has not gone down well with B-schools.

CBSE proficiency test to be held in April

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will conduct its optional proficiency test for Std X students between April 14 and 18 next year. This test will be for students who will appear for their Std X final exams in March. The broad objectives of the optional proficiency test include benchmarking of skills and higher mental abilities of students.

CBSE grants 30 minutes extra for open book exams

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has decided to give 30 minutes extra to students of Class IX and XI in the March 2014 final exams, specifically for the open book exam. The Open Text Based Assessment (OTBA) will debut in March as a separate section within the main question paper. The OTBA questions will be in addition to the original number questions as per last year's pattern.

MP PET 2014 Scrapped - Admissions Through JEE Main 2014

The state of Madhya Pradesh has decided to conduct the engineering admissions for undergraduate programs through JEE Main 2014, scrapping its own MP PET 2014.

IPU CET 2014 Dates Declared

Guru Gobind Indraprastha University (GGSIPU) has released the dates of IPU CET 2014 for B.Tech courses for session 2014-15. The notification mentions dates of IPU CET 2014 Application Form as well as Entrance Exam.Candidates can buy the application form and admission brochure from the designated branches of Indian Bank for Rs.1000 from around mid-week of January 2014.Form Submission Deadline is 10 April 2014.

Design education in India gathers momentum, 4 new NIDs by 2014

In accordance with the National Design Policy, 2007, the four new National Institutes of Design (NID) may be established in a year or two i.e. by 2014 or 2015 according to Pradyumna Vyas, Director, National Institute of Design (NID) who was in the capital for the 3rd CII NID Design Summit organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) and the National Institute of Design (NID.)

MHRD to offer 5000 Faculty Positions in Higher Education

The Ministry of Human Resource Development proposes to provide for 5000 faculty positions in the higher education under the Rashtriya Uchchatar Shiksha Abhiyan (RUSA) during the current Five Year Plan, ending 2017. Support will be provided to fill positions in the category of Assistant Professors or equivalent cadre against vacancies.

WBJEE 2014 Application Form Releasing in January 2014

WBJEE 2014 Application Form is likely to be released in January 2014. Candidates can fill the form on the official website of West Bengal JEE. The process of form submission would be completely online where candidates have to submit all the details (personal, communication, educational) on the web-based form.

CBSE Class 10 and 12 Board Exams from 1 March, 2014

The board exams for the 2013 - 2014 academic session conducted for class 10 and 12 by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) will begin from 1 March, 2014, according to an official statement from the CBSE.

Scholarships in India

External Scholarships

Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Higher Education administers only those scholarships/fellowships which are being offered by the foreign countries under Cultural Exchange Programmes and other Programmes. The subject fields are generally chosen for those subject fields, facilities for which are available in the donor country and also keeping in view the national needs. On receipt of the offer of scholarships/fellowships from the donor country, the same is advertised on Department's website www.education.nic.in and in some cases leading newspapers and through circulars to States/UTs, Universities etc. ■

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

C L Kaul*

Kashmir Shaivism (Part – 14)

1.0 True or False

a) Swami Lakshmanjoo was born in the year 1913. (T/F)

b) Swami Lakshmanjoo completed his studies up to Middle Standard. (T/F)

c) Swami Lakshmanjoo discontinued his studies because of his father's illness. (T/F)

d) Swami Lakshmanjoo taught *Shaiva* texts also at Swami Ram Shaiva (Trika) Ashram, Fateh Kadal. (T/F)

e) Swami Lakshmanjoo performed his *Sadhana* also at Sadhu Ganga, Kandi Khas, Handwara. (T/F)

2.0 Fill in the blanks

a) Swami Lakshmanjoo started making *Shivalinga* out of clay and worshiping it at the age of......

b) Swami Lakshmanjoo was initiated by Mahtab Kak at the age of......

c) Swami Lakshmanjoo started meditation at the age of.......

d) Swami Lakshmanjoo's *Yagnopavit* ceremony was performed at the age of........

e) Swami Lakshmanjoo entered the house at Marbal, where he continued his *Sadhana*, at the age of.....

(Three, five, seven, sixteen, twenty two)

3.0 Match the following (In respect of Swami Lakshmanjoo)

Aspect: a) Learning *Shrimad Bhagavad Gita*, b) Learning *Shaiva* texts like *Ishvarapratyabhijna*, c) *vahek gat'iu pachh bah* (12th day of dark fortnight of *vahek* i.e. Apr-May), d) *euushid gat'iu pachh tsoram* (4th day of dark fortnight of *euushid* i.e. Sep-Oct), e) Composer of *Gurustuti* in honour of Swami Lakshmanjoo

Correspondence: Acharya Rameshwar Jha, *Janam Divas*, *Mahasamadhi Divas*, Pandit Maheshvar Nath Razdan, Swami Mahtab Kak

4.0 Name the following (from among devotees / disciples of Swami Lakshmanjoo)

a) One who established *Kashmir Shaiva Pathika* at Guptganga, b) One who recorded Swamiji' s discourses in English, c) One who recorded Swamiji' s discourses in Kashmiri, d) One who after receiving knowledge from Swamiji wrote *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*, e) One who after receiving knowledge from Swamiji translated *Tantraloka* into Hindi

5.0 Find the odd man out (with respect to Swami Lakshmanjoo)

a) i) Maharishi Ramana, ii) Swami Shivananda Saraswati, iii) Mahatma Gandhi, iv) Maharishi Mahesh Yogi; b) i) Meher Baba, ii) J Krishnamurty, iii) Smt. Indira Gandhi, iv) Swami Ramdas; c) i) Gopinath Kaviraja, ii) Swami Muktananda, iii) Swami Satchitananda, iv) Swami Ranganathananda

6.0 Give word meaning (in English)

a) Ahimsa, b) *Satya*, c) *Asteya*, d) *Aparigraha*, *e) Brahmacharya*

Please see Answers in the next issue.

Answers to the questions of Kashmir Shaivism (Part – 13)

1.0 T, T, T, T, F; **2.0** a) Pandit Narayan Dass Raina, b) Pandit Jia Lal Sopory, c) Swami Lakshmanjoo, d) Ishwar Ashram, e) *Kashmir Shaiva Pathika*; **3.0** a) 1965, b) 1935, c) 1914, d) 1933, e) 1907; **4.0** a) Swami Lakshmanjoo, b) Swami Mahtab Kak, c) Swami Ram, d) Sushree Sharika Devi, e) Pandit Maheshvar Nath Razdan; **5.0** a) Mark SG Dyczkowski (Interacted with Swamiji at Ishwar Ashram, all others interacted at old Ashram), b) Paul Reps (Interacted with Swamiji at old Ashram, all others interacted at Ishwar Ashram), c) KD Tripathi (Disciple of Acharya Rameshvar Jha, all others disciples of Swami Lakshmanjoo); **6.0** a) Highest or Supreme, b) Supreme energy, c) Supreme experience, d) Supreme power, e) Supreme word or speech.

* Author of 'Encyclopedia of Kashmiri Pandit Culture and Heritage'

EDITOR'S MAIL

Tributes to Shri Shiban Ji Dudha

Mr. Shiban Dudha's sudden demise on 10th of November, 2013, was mourned by the entire Kashmiri community across the world. His contribution for the community in exile has been hailed by one and all. While his roles in the Kashmiri Samiti Delhi and All India Kashmiri Samaj are fairly well known, I would like to make a mention of two of his very important initiatives and interventions for the community. One was in getting the AIKS's Kashmiri Literary magazine *Vaakh* registered with the Registrar of Newspapers office. He accompanied me a number of times to the RNI's office at R. K. Puram and was instrumental in getting it registered. In fact his name continues to be printed on the cover page of *Vaakh* even now for some technical reasons though his tenure as General Secretary of AIKS had ended several years back. Second, when he single handedly confronted Mr. Mufti Mohamad Syed, chairperson of PDP, at Samavar in Pamposh Enclave and made him realize his role in the 1986 Anantnag riots and his cowardly and selfish role to get hardcore militants freed in exchange of his daughter Rubaya Syed when he was Home Minister of India. Shibanji had come prepared with dotted points for that meeting which was attended by almost all KP stalwarts based in Delhi.

He belonged to a well known family whose every member has contributed in one or the other way for the welfare of the Biradari. His elder brother, Dr. T. N. Dudha, whom I know since Jawahar Nagar days, settled in Noida after migration, would not accept any fees from Kashmiris. When asked how would he survive like that, he would point towards non-Kashmiri patients. Shibanji was an all-rounder, a community activist, a successful professional and a devoted family man. His untimely demise would be felt by one and all concerned. I would miss his ready to help ever-smiling face. I offer my heartfelt condolences to the departed soul and pray for his eternal peace.

– Dr. Roop Krishen Bhat

Naad cuts a dash

The magazine *Naad* is beginning to cut a dash in our Community at least in India. My sincere wishes to the core editorial team and the esteemed writers who contribute to the magazine.

A. K. Sadhu, Pune
Mob: 09419203905

BOOK REVIEWS

Kashmir-its Aborgines And Their Exodus by Col. Tej K. Tikoo

Review by Prof. A. N Sadhu

The author starts with an elaborate preface to the book manifesting in no unclear terms what the book is to unfold through its pages which run to around 680 including Appendices, Indices, etc.

The first four chapters of the book are repetitive and serve as a painful reminder of the gory tales of the last six centuries with the sole exception of the period of Badshah and Dogra rule. Judging by these historical accounts it becomes very difficult to disagree with the proponents of Panun Kashmir asking for a piece of land where the community will have its own governance in place supervised by the benevolent persons of the likes of Sahajram and Birbal Dhar who arranged a safe escort for Afghan women to return home besides successfully stalling the process of demolishing a mosque in Srinagar city. Although much water has flown down the Jhelum but examining history in the backdrop of what happened in 1989-90, one is compelled to take guard while searching for alternatives of return and rehabilitation of the displaced Kashmiri Pandits. The author has very competently summed up the state of affairs in the valley of Kashmir over this entire period. Although I am not a historian but it should not be difficult to underscore the need for an objective and purposeful reporting and recording of historical facts. Reading between the lines, these historical happenings also convey a message of staying together and supplementing each other's efforts directed towards the welfare of the community. The fifth chapter deals with geography, demography and the state of infrastructure like road network and communications till 1947. It refreshes the knowledge about the vast expanse of the state encompassing the regions of Jammu, Kashmir valley, Ladakh region, Gilgit and Baltistan and areas around these regions, not all of which are now the parts of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. It also talks of fine varieties of paddy and an exceptionally high quality of saffron grown in Kashmir. The mention of Kashmir's natural splendour and Ladakh's rock beauty is prominent. The state of Jammu and Kashmir has always remained strategically very important and continues to retain that position till date.

The chapter on Kashmiri Pandits is a very important part of the book not for the reason that it speaks of Kashmiri Pandits but for the reason that it addresses several queries regarding Kashmiri Pandits as a distinct human stock. Question, often asked, about why should Hindus of Kashmir be distinctly called as Kashmiri Pandits when they are a part and parcel of the Hindu population of the country, is adequately and appropriately addressed in this chapter. Primarily for the reason that living in a landlocked territory, Isolated from the rest of the world these descedents of saints and sages, evolved their own social and religious order, established their own traditions and customs and lived as a distinct class of people insulated against external impact till the beginning of fourteenth century when foreign aggressors entered the valley. The evolution of Trika philosophy (Kashmir Shaivism) and it's lucid enunciation by scholars of that time also seems to have conferred on them the distinction of being called as Kashmiri Pandits, *i.e.* the scholars of Kashmir. The rich contribution that these scholars made to the language of *Sanskrit* (particularly its grammar), mathematics, history and spirituality should stand as a great tribute to their outstanding scholarship. The essence of Trika philosophy based on the Ultimate Reality, the Universal Energy and the self is highly scientific in logic and content. This chapter also throws light on the contributions of Kashmiri Pandits to literature, development of Sharda language, art, culture, architecture and painting besides Buddhism and Tantric philosophy. Going by common parlance, the Pandits of Kashmir should have been vegetarians only (eating *Haak Batha*) but how have they become non-vegetarians is explained by different people differently. The extreme climatic conditions must have necessitated a different form of costume as compared to the one used in the rest of the country,although there hardly is any difference now except for *Pheran* which still is used extensively.

The chapter on Kashmiriat is equally

important and educative to those who have not lived in Kashmir. A blend of Rishi-Sufi social and cultural traditions gave rise to what became known as Kashmiriat- a social order based on mutual respect, tolerance and common practices, in many ways. Such a broad approach towards understanding and promoting a social order helped in strengthening the humanism, the essence of which can easily be found in the verses of Lalded and Nundrishi. I was once asked in a seminar, what I meant by Kashmiriat. I told the seminarians that if they want to have the feel of Kashmiriat, they should silently join the morning or evening assembly of innocent villagers under the shade of a mighty chinar tree and listen to their discourses on brotherhood and harmonious living. These innocent scholars, I always rated much higher than some literate ones because of their pure thoughts undiluted by the hypocrisy and deceit. The author himself writes, "The faith in Rishi-Sufi traditions in Kashmir is the heart and soul of what is known as Kashmiriat (p.171). The author seems to have made an incisive investigation into the concept of Kashmiriat and brought out more similarities in thought and action relating to idol worship, *pranayama* (Passe-Anfas) and mutual reverence to Hindu shrines and Muslim dargahs. This part of the book should stimulate a critically appreciative response to a scholarly piece of work.

There is no explicit enunciation of the concept of Kashmiriat, as such, but overtly or covertly, it has been evoked many a time, to tide over the possible emergence of a strife on communal basis. There have, however, been no serious efforts to deepen its ethos across the social fabric and promote a new order overtime based on common bonds and not on religion alone. In fact the winds blew against it. The author has devoted a good deal of his effort to revisit the concept of Kashmiriat and critically examine its evolution and the present status. The author is right in concluding that the ethos of Kashmiriat received a serious setback in the last three decades and many a young scholars refuse to accept that there ever was something known as Kashmiriat. The author has also quoted some persons who write on Kashmir in one or the other context, defining Kashmiriat in their own way and one may not agree with every one of them.

The author has painstakingly devoted a full chapter of hundred pages to the geneses of Kashmir problem and its complexities. He deserves appreciation for having dealt with the problem of Kashmir so exhaustively and yet so intelligibly as to make it easy for the readers to understand the cobwebs involved in it. For experts on Kashmir, this may appear repetitive and rhetoric but for readers, in general, it offers a useful insight into the subject and helps them to comprehend the complications associated with it. One would like to agree with the author that the problem is the creation of Sheikh Abdullah's ambitions and Jawaharlal Nehru's idealism. Jinnah made no less a contribution. Going by the contents of the book, it is easy to infer that Pakistan leadership were aiming at two in the bush than one in hand. The Indian leadership was trapped into the acceptance of ceasefire which resulted into greater loss to Jammu region than to Kashmir valley. Maharaja, such an outstanding reformist and a people - friendly ruler, was confused because of ambivalent signals coming from different directions, as a result of which, his prevarication compounded the problem with more complexities. Keeping in view its strategic geo-political location, the external powers having vested interest, added their own share to its complexities.

The chapter on article 370 begins with a quote of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, "There is nothing sacrosanct about Article 370". This quote explodes quite a few myths built around it. Col. Tikoo has rightly explained that this provision was made in the Indian Constitution keeping in view the situation prevailing at that time in the sub-continent with, probably, a tacit understanding that this provision will cease to be operative in due course of time. The refusal of the Centre of the suggestion of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to incorporate a clause of perpetuity of the government that he headed, in the Constitution of India, must have strained the relations between him and Jawahar Lal Nehru resulting into subjective interpretations of the Article by the leadership of NC. However, allowing the perceptions at the individual level to impact the macro parameters of a democratic and secular country like India would neither speak of maturity nor of statesmanship. Politicians are prone to outwit each other by deceit or by ditching but its adverse impact makes the generations to suffer.

The author has also written, in detail, about

the developments that followed the re-installation of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in the seat of power, in the state, as also of the emergence of Janta Party and return of Congress to power in 1980 and the impact of these developments on Kashmir scenario. The author talks of the pent up feelings across the border after the 1965 and 1971 wars and the Pakistanis' intensified efforts to fish in the troubled waters of Kashmir and avenge the defeat in Bangladesh. While as all these years witnessed an uneasy truce, this was also the period when the seeds of fanatic turbulence were sown deep into the soil of Kashmir. These seeds ultimately sprouted into the storm in late eighties which has still not abated.

Pakistan's obsession with Kashmir is more out of compulsion than out of consideration. Pakistan is still struggling to stabilise the country and its systems. Army's strong intervention in the governance of the country has reduced the chances of its political stability and resulted in the emergence of a religio-political system, based on army's support and intervention on regular basis. Army's failures in the three wars with India has convinced the Pakistanis that they cannot wrest Kashmir by force and hence recourse to Jehad with full backing of the country's defence forces. ISI has further compounded the problems. The author has elaborately discussed the happenings in the sub-continent and the role played by foreign vested interests in fomenting enmity with India and fostering fanaticism in the region.For Pakistan it is important to recognise that in the changing world scenario, it is always peace and not the war which is at premium. What is required is the normalisation of relations and priority attention to the development concerns to enhance the welfare of the people in the subcontinent.

Chapters 13 to 17 have been devoted to Kashmiri Pandits' killings, brutalities, loot, arson, desecration of places of worship, encroachment on their properties, their exodus and its aftermath. The author, very rightly, explains that what happened in eighties and nineties, has marked the culmination of a process of marginalisation of Kashmiri Pandits, which had been launched much earlier, in a covert manner. The apathetic attitude of the state and central governments has clearly been brought out. However, it is an additional volume on the atrocities on Kashmiri Pandits, their forced exodus and total neglect after exodus, depriving them of their fundamental rights in a callous manner. A striking fact brought to light is that Kashmiri Pandit population declined from around 25 per cent in 1941 to one or two per cent as per the latest census report. Accounting for the margin of error, it can safely be inferred that silent exodus of Kashmiri Pandits has been on right from 1931 and no effort seems to have been made to stall it resulting into the community's political marginalisation and impoverishment, by a design.

Kashmiri Pandits are Indians to the core of their heart and shall remain so, even though this is one community, in the country, that has suffered a lot all through. It is for their commitment to the nation, that they have been targeted and brutalised and ultimately thrown out of their homes and hearths. The hostile environment in which Kashmiri Pandits have been living after exodus has wreaked havoc on their health, education, psychology, demography and all other aspects of life. It is difficult to venture into predictions, because history takes its own turns and twists but the ethos of Kashmiriat stands damaged beyond repair, at least, in the near future. In the long run each one of those who still believe that Kashmir should not lose its faith in secular traditions, will not be there and how much the central and state leadership will infuse among the youth of Kashmir, the spirit of secularism ends with a note of interrogation. Kashmiri Pandits' strong apprehensions in this regard are justified and clearly evidenced by the historical facts. Col. Tikoo has exploded many a myth by citing hard facts. Not taking an objective and hard look at these facts may lead to gloomy prognostication and its dark shadows in the future. The country needs a statesman with vision and understanding to steer it through this difficult period.

The last two chapters of the book, "return and rehabilitation"and "critical issues" have not received the adequate attention, either in terms of content or in terms of policy imperatives. Looking at the size of the book as also the initial discourses, one thought this narrative will conclude on a more thoughtful and promising note suggestive of the future course to be adopted by the community. The discussion on return and rehabilitation has gone along the customary way without suggesting an alternative model and the method to work on it. Critical issues are general in nature and no light is thrown on the resolution of these issues. The author does talk of adjustment

to new environs and carving out a niche in these by dint of hard work and intelligence, of which, there is no dearth among our youth. Should that imply that Kashmir be forgotten and thrust be placed on new opportunities which will be more assuring of a stable and prosperous future for our posterity? The community cannot and will not surrender its inalienable right on the land of its ancestors. We need to put our heads together to thrash out a workable and sustainable arrangement safeguarding our economic, social and political rights besides, of course, ensuring security and dignity within the democratic, secular and egalitarian system as per the Constitution of the country. Every Kashmiri Pandit should be proud of the community as it has stood like a rock against a turbulent tsunami and kept its head high and forged ahead. The community has intrinsic capability as also the strength to innovate a strategy and get it operationalized. The unity is the keyword.

The author Col. Tej K. Tikoo deserves all praise for producing such an informative and educative volume on Kashmiri Pandits. It should enrich the libraries of the world. Anyone who reads the book cannot resist recommending it to others. The job has been done very skilfully and scholarly. I am sure, Col. Tikoo will not rest here, and he should be having more plans in mind for which I wish him success. ■

Kashmir Hindu Heritage - A Study – S. N. Pandit. Rs 450/-. pp. 463.

A review by Adarsh Ajit

Reconnecting with the lost signs

At a time when Kashmiri Pandits, displaced from the valley more than two decades ago, are virtually delinked with their shrines, temples, symbols of faith, language, and the Kashmir legacy as a whole, S N Pandit, through his book, Kashmir Hindu Heritage-A Study, tries to regenerate their warmth and tie them again with these lost signs. Even analyzing the book by its face value the degree of laborious toil exercised by the author in supplementing his personal readings with the historical authenticities is plainly disclosed. The big positivity of S N Pandit is that he has not locked up his works within the four walls but has extended it to the broader levels and agreeably bonded Kashmir with vast Bharat Varsha. Quoting Kalhan Mr. Pandit says that the mountain walls, acting as natural hurdles, have stopped foreign influences on Kashmir and thus there are little differences in socio-religious, ritualistic patterns and customs of people of Kashmir and that of the Bharat Varsha. However Pandit puts the present scholars in dock for their continued indifference towards the massive fortune of literature that is buried deep in libraries of the country and abroad.

The book has been divided into five chapters. In its first chapter 'Puranas-our heritage' S N Pandit remarks that *Vishnudharmottara Purana* is the most voluminous of all the three Puranas found till date in Kashmir and various Vaishnavite dictions found in the ancient Madra Desha (the area between the North Punjab to the south of Jammu province) have elaborately been discussed in it. Describing Nilmata Purana as a conversation between the king Janmejaye, son of Parikshita, and the grandson of Arjuna and Rishi Vaishampayana, pupil of Maharishi Vyasa, S N Pandit unfolds that the spirit of co-existence and brotherhood that existed among various castes and creeds like, the Shaivites, the Vaishnavaits, the followers of Brahma, Buddha, the Nagas, the *Pishachas*, the *Yakshas*, etc., of the valley later on spread throughout the whole of the subcontinent. In other words, it can be said, that the author has defined Central Asia as the extension Kashmir.

Explaining Vasuki Purana, the author informs that in order to establish the ancient legacy of the Nagas, the Mahabharata clearly states that the great grandfather of Vasudeva was a Naga Chief, Vasuki. Quoting Smritis he states that fifteen Naga Rajas existed in the subcontinent to whom we offer our oblations while performing various rites. Most importantly the author has not missed to mention that Vasuki Purana is a short sketch of the religious places of the small valley of Bhaderwah also known as chotah Kashmir.

In the second Chapter captioned The Tirathas Of Kashmir, S N Pandit, makes a political

observation that the political upheavals and intense social turmoil and civilizational onslaughts virtually demolished the very roots of the millennia old social and cultural structure that had served as an anchor for the survival of the indigenous people and it could not be reassembled till date even by bits and slices so as to rebuild it to its ancient grandeur once again. Giving historical, religious and geographical backgrounds of Shankaracharya hillock, Shakti Peetha at Zabarvan, Shakti Peetha of Rajnya, Chakreshvra, Jwala Devi, etc the author says that the rock known as Shankarpal, is still lying on the mountain above Harvan without a trace of any inscription engraved on it. It is very important to mention here that the author has termed Ishwarsaroopa, Swami Lakshman Joo Maharaj as the last doyen of Kashmir Shaivism. About Mata Maha Rajnya S N Pandit reaffirms the legend that entering the valley of Satisar she is said to have touched some of the ancient tirthas of the valley like Manzgam, Luk Bhawan, Larkipora, Tikkar, Shailkputri, Haramukata Ganga and finally reaching Tulamula. Jagat Guru Shankaracharya is believed to have attained final realization at the feet of the Mother Goddess at Tulamula, and as per the author, Shankaracharya composed the famous *Stutis* in her praise called, *Saundariya Lahari*.

In chapter Fairs and Festivals the author has thrown light on various fairs and festivals that have become obligatory essentials of the Kashmiri Pandit subsistence. One among them is *Shravana Punim* which is the culmination of the Swami Amreshvar Pilgrimage. The author has competently included few lines of ancient folk songs of Kashmir which certify the reverence of this distinguished day for Kashmiri Pandits. The shrine of Amaranth (as it is commonly known) is venerated through the length and breadth of the country and it acts like a pivotal link between Kashmir and the rest of India.

'*Nirvaasan, vanta kati chon aasan, andkaar kaastam vandayou praan, kartam so'di vaanin hish aash mati, chham chaini aash mati pooran kar*'. S. N. Pandit is not only focused towards pointing out the riches of Kashmir legacy but after discussing and narrating the things he, like a teacher, makes us to understand the magnitude of these possessions. While commenting on Janam Ashtami (*Zarama Saṭam*) he tries to elucidate the impact of the Yadava dynasty on the political map of the sub-continent and its past relations with Kashmir. The month of *Magha* has been described as the holiest of all the twelve months of the year. Characterizing the significance of *Gauri Tritiya*, Kalhana has been vociferously quoted. Kashmir, the abode of Shiva, is the home of Goddess Sarasvati. 'The Sharada Tirtha appears to have lost its old grandeur and importance especially during the unfavourable medieval period of Kashmir history. We have a reference in the *Rajatarngini* vs., 2552 and 2706 confirming 'the siege of the fortress of Sharadi'. Even while narrating the story of *Navreh Mavas*, the concluding day of the year, Pandit feels it necessary to divulge that during the medieval period, a great son of the valley, Shri Shriya Bhat lived here, succeeded in changing the mind of Sultan Zain-ul-Abidin. It was due to the strenuous efforts of Shriya Bhat that the migrated and suffering Hindus were resettled in their ancestral homes. It is also worthy of S N Pandit to explore that the descendents of Shriya Bhat lived at Vichharnag till the recent exodus of the Hindus from the valley in the year 1990.

Swami Nand Bab, Swami Jivan Sahib,Pandit Kashyap Bandhu, Pandit Govind Kaul, Pandit Mukund Ram Shastri, Mata Rupa Bhawani, Shakti Ji Maharaj, Chandra Joo Bichroo, Pandit Keshava Nath Ji, Shri Shriya Bhat, Bhagwan Gopi Nath Ji, Jotshi Pandit Keshav Bhat, Swami Ram Ji and Master Zinda Koul, etc have been discussed in Chapter fourth 'Our Luminaries', and Chapter five covers different religious practices exercised or observed by the Kashmiri Pandit community.

The book may partially be called 'one in all' for Kashmiri Pandits because it carries a handful from all sections of community's belongings, be it from history, geography, politics, society, religion, etc. Like an almanac it gives also the essence of socio-religious practices. The photographs and the layout have been incorporated to make things more understandable. The front cover carrying a photo of a dilapidated temple, and back-cover, a parental home of the author, show historical fumes which Pandits have gone through from time to time. The author has dedicated the book to his late father Shri Keshav Nath Pandit who was the victim in the dreaded jaws of militants and Islamic zealots. The cuttings of leading Urdu dailies included in the book aggravate the pain of the turmoil. ■

POEMS FROM OLD AND YOUNG

FISH OUT OF WATER

K. L. Chowdhury

Mother,
your suffering has raised questions
about the traits and attributes
that defined you all your life.

You gave alms away
with both your hands;
you clothed the naked fakirs
and cooked cuisine for them;.
you were kind to the animals;
you worshipped the trees;
you propitiated the deities.

I remember, one time,
it was just before Shivratri
when we took a ferry upstream
from home to your father's place.
Just when we were seated,
the boatman hauled the net
and delivered live fish onto the boat.

Fish out of water they were,
tossing about, leaping in the air.
You could not bear to watch the fish
gasping for life,
and asked him the price of his catch.
He said he would have to weigh up
before he could let you know.
You hastily produced your purse
and, opened the strings wide.
"Pray, make a quick guess,
and toss the fish back into the river
before they fall dead.
Let me know how much I owe you."

I was as surprised as the boatman
as he flung the whole lot
back into the running stream
and gathered the price from you.

"Why did you have to pay for fish, mother,
that have gone back into the water?"
"I could not bear
to see the fish in their death- throes."
"But he will catch them again, for sure."
"Yes, he will cast the net again,
but the ones that were destined to live
have swum out of his reach for now.
I was only an instrument of god's will."

How does your god bear
to see you in throes, mother?
Why doesn't he send you a savior
when you are like the fish out of water?"

From: The Last Frontier (Dialogues between a Son and Mother)

Conundrum

Shereen Wakhlu

I can't seem to understand the fact
That the world spins in circles
Because the way my world
Shatters around me
Makes it feel like the earth
Is thrown around in space.

I can't seem to understand
If the egg or the chicken came first;
I personally believe that the devil came first.
He played a clever trick
He made humans .....
No matter how hard they tried
to eradicate the bad in them
Every one had it –
Some more than others;
And that has not changed since.

I can't seem to understand happiness.
Yes, I have felt it before.
But –
Does it last?
Or does it fade
Far,
far away?

[Shereen is just twelve and lives in Dallas, USA]





AIKS Matrimonial Service

AIKS MATRIMONIAL SERVICE

■ Matrimonial alliance invited for a brilliant, handsome KP boy (DOB: 04-February-1977; 12:12 pm at Srinagar; height-172 cms), Ph.D. in Zoology, working as assistant professor in Zoology at a reputed university. No demands. Girl's merits only consideration. Contact for full details at matrimonysrinagar@gmail.com or call on 09417834032.

■ "Suitable alliance invited for my son, Vishant Saraf, born at Srinagar on 19th Dec.1985 at 4.43pm, presently working in Hotel J. W. Marriott at Chandigarh and likely to join Hotel Westin, Gurgoan, shortly, as Astt. Manager. (House keeping-Room Division) Educational qualification: Degree in Hotel Management from IHM and MBA in HR and Business Management (IMT Ghaziabad) Height 172 cms. For bio-data and Tekni, please contact on e-mail visaraf2002@gmail.com or cell no. 9780026162, 0172-2673731 or postal address: Vijay saraf, 3074 SBI Officers Society, Sector 49 D, Chandigarh".

■ Suitable alliance invited for our son, tall and fair, born at Srinagar on 8th July, 1983 (5.22PM), Height 176 Cms. MBA in Finance & Marketing from a reputed University. Working in an IT company at Jaipur. Six figure salary PA. Originally resident of Srinagar. Interested may contact with Tekni and Kulawali on Emails: vkaul2002@yahoo.co.in, kkoulin2003@yahoo.com. Mob: 9418020426, 9418094544.

■ Suitable alliance is invited for Mr. Ishan Bhat, B.E and MBA, Born on 14th of March 1984. Working as Business Development Executive in a MNC (Plobal Tech.) and presently posted at Pune. For Tekni and Bio-Data pl. contact Shri Chand Krishan Bhat (Manager State Bank of India Jaipur) on 09950048978 or at their house no. 189-B, Vaibhav Vihar, Near Patrakar Colony Mansarowar Jaipur (Own House). The family is actually resident of New Colony Sopore Kashmir.

■ Seeking matrimonial alliance for 1983 born, 5 ft 3 inch, MBA finance working with leading bank as Manager, location Gurgaon. Interested may revert with tekni & biodata on ravinder.koul@gmail.com or Mobile No. +91-9953088818

Alliance invited for KP Boy born 1982 in Kashmir. Doing job in Delhi. For tekni & kulawali plz contact, Rakesh Zaroo, Vodafone Spacetel Ltd., Mob: 9796-218-632.

■ A suitable match required for a KP girl, 5' 7", born Dec 13, 1987, currently pursuing MD in Paediatrics from GB Pant Hospital, Srinagar (first year). Accomplished MBBS from GMC, Jammu. Pl contact Shri Chaman Lal Kaul, Phone 0199271711, Cell No. 09419216768.

■ Seeking matrimonial alliance for myself (Ravi Mattoo). Born 29 Dec, 1976, 06: 30:00 hrs at Srinagar (Badyar Bala). Working as a Program Mgr with Network solution Pvt. Ltd (An IBM Company) at Pune. Interested may touch base via Email:rkmworld@rediffmail.com.

■ Suitable alliance is invited for my daughters (1) working as a lecturer in a degree college in Jammu, having educational qualification MCA & pursuing M.Tech through Lovely University, D.O.B - 28-7-1982 (4.10 a.m.), height 5' 6". Ready to work outside J&K after marriage. (2) Running a coaching centre at Jammu, qualification B.Sc. B.Ed, M.B.A pursuing M.A Sociology, height 5' 5", D.O.B -14-7-1983 (7A.M). Applied for Govt. job under migrant quota in Kashmir. Resident of Loke Bhavan, Anantnag before migration, at present living at Jammu. **Email Address:** snbhatveer@gmail.com, Phone no: 0191-2504435, Mob: **962206951**

■ Suitable alliance invited for our son, born Srinagar 26th April, 1986 at 12.15 p.m., 5' 10", B.E (Electrical), MBA (Mktg.), presently working in an advertising (MNC) company at Gurgaon. Parents settled in Chandigarh H. No. 5521, Sec – 38, West. Interested may please contact at Mobile Nos: 09779005155, 09417005155, 0172-2625764, 0172-2771506, 0172-4625521. or mail at mujoo.vijay@gmail.com.

■ Alliance is invited for Ashish Bhan born on 21 Oct. 1985 at 12:12 noon in Srinagar. Height 5' 11" Schooling from DPS R K Puram, LLM (UCL) London and Diploma in Corp-Governance, London School of Economics. He is a practicing Advocate of the Supreme Court and is Sr. Associate with TRILEGAL, an International Law firm.

He is the son of Shri Ashok Bhan, Sr. Advocate, Supreme Court of India.

Contact Details :- Mob No 91-9811866835, Email *ashokbhan@rediffmail.com*

■ Matrimonial Alliance invited for our sweet-natured, Convent educated daughter Ht 166 inch BE (I.T) MBA (Regular) Business School University Jammu, working as Assistant Manager (H.R) in MNC at Hyderabad. Contact Er Ashok Tikoo, 49/1 Vivek Vihar (opposite Soap Factory) Paloura Jammu 181121. Email a.tikoo@yahoo.com 01912531762, 9419134681, 9419107183

■ Suitable alliance invited for my son, born 24th July 1986 at Delhi, height 186 cms., MBA from Boston, U.S.A. Self employed in family business having govt. recognised export houses, corporate office at

C-153, Sector-63, Noida. Interested may kindly contact for *tekni/kulawali* through email : *arunkwattal@gmail.com* / *kuldeep_wattal@yahoo*.com or call 9811058696, 9811054228

■ Suitable alliance is invited for our Daughter-fair, good looking, born on 24th July 1983, completed her M.B.B.S from Govt. Medical College in Maharashtra in 2009 and presently working in a private hospital in NCR. Interested may contact on below mentioned nos. :- 09419103332, 9469552005, 0191-2555977 or *ashima_tiku@yahoo.com.*

■ Suitable alliance invited for my daughter, born on 28th September, 1985 at 1:26 a.m. New Delhi. 5' 4.5" tall, MSc (Biotech) from Delhi; M.Res. from U.K. and is likely to submit Thesis (PhD) (Genes, DNA. RNA) in October 2013 to U.K. University. She is also proficient in computer programming. She is in U.K. from the last four years and getting scholarship from U.K. Govt. Interested may contact E-mail:*dharpran9@gmail.com; d.rita55@gmail.com.* Tel 22720017; 22728810; 43107836; 9811107227; 9871144736.

■ Alliance is invited for a handsome and blessed with high human values, only son, born on 3rd September 1985 at 2.25 p.m at Srinagar Kashmir. Height 170 cms, B.E Mechanical, working as Assistant Manager in Shree Ram Pistons and Rings Ltd. Gaziabad. Own flat at Faridabad. Interested may contact for tekni/ kulawali at email:- *tikoo.bk01@gmail.com*, or mobile no. 09999131654, 09811350503, also at Jammu 0191-2504559.

■ Suitable alliance invited for our son, Vipin Bhat, born on 27.10.1986, height 5.6 ft. having passed B. Tech in Electronics and telecommunication and presently working as Networking Engineer in an MNC i.e Sungard and is posted at Aundh Pune. Family actually from Village Nagam of Tehsil Chadoora, District Badgam and presently residing at House no. 1, Basant Nagar Ext. Janipur, Jammu. For other details, *Tekni* and *kulawali*, Pl. contact B.K.Bhat at 09419210744 or 9469259444.

■ I am searching a well cultured KP boy for my daughter (DOB 15th Sept,1985), height 5'. 5", done MBA in HR from Punjab Technical University, PGDBM from Jammu University, BSc from Jammu University. One Year Diploma in Computer Application. Working in a Private School in Jammu. Originally resident of Kupwara Kashmir. Interested may please contact A K Raina with *Tekni* and Bio- data at following ; Contact on:- *autarkraina@gmail.com*, or :- +91-9796495830 (Jammu), +91-9419377514 (Jammu), +91-9899319303(Gurgaon)

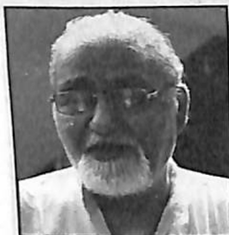
■ Alliance sought for my son Rakesh, DOB 25th Sept. 1979, Height 6ft, qualification BE (Mech) DCA. Doing his own business and citizen of USA., If interested contact Ashok Koul on 8295975854/9896352270 or email *ashokkoul57@gmail.com*

■ Alliance invited for our meritorious, handsome, 5' 11' tall doctor son, born Srinagar January 24, 1987 (5:48 p.m.), studied at prestigious educational institutions. Presently doing residency in Medicine in USA. Belongs to a reputed and well settled family of doctors based in New Delhi. We are seeking a matching cultured beautiful medico bride from a respectable family. Those interested may kindly mail the *kulawali* and *Tekni* of the girl at *dranilmotta@gmail.com* and may contact Dr. Renu at 9582500371.

■ Alliance invited for KP boy born March 15, 1982„ at Kashmir, presently working with MNC Company at Noida. For further correspondance, Plz contact 09018119138.

OBITUARIES

Shamboo Nath Kak



Shri Shamboo Nath Kak, son of late Saligram Kak, (originally resident of Karfali Mohalla, Habba Kadal, Srinagar) and presently at 275, Ashoka Enclave, Sector – 34, Faridabad, left for his heavenly abode on Dec 27th, 2013. Shri Kak was raised in a modest family background with an upbringing full of values, righteousness and of an always – willing to – help human being.

We all, in his family and our community will miss his strong presence and his being the thread to a beautiful chain, most of the times invisible but strong, that it holds all beads together. We wish we had privilege of being around him for some more time.

However, **death is certain for the one who is born and also is birth certain for the ones who died; they are matters unavoidable and, therefore, they do not deserve lamentation (Shri Bagvat Gita).**

We hope that we all will celebrate his life, uphold his values and righteous things he stood for all his life.

- Sandeep and Sanjeev Kak



[1925 – 2013]

Shri Padam Nath Raina S/o Late Pt. Shiv Ji Raina (originally of Malik Aangan, Fateh Kadal/Kralpora) and presently at B-144, Sector – 51, Noida, passed away on December 4, 2013.

He is survived by his wife, Chuni Devi Raina and Sons & Daughters - Virendra & Jharna Raina, Shashi & Kavita Raina, Indira & Sri Krishen Kaul, Reeta & Vinod Kaul and Sangeeta & Rajender Bhat.

Soomawati Talashi

Smt. Soomawati Talashi (originally resident of Walarhame, Salar, Anantnag Kmr), mother of Shri M. L. Talashi and mother-in-law of Smt. Ratna Talashi (598-A, Shipra Suncity, Indirapuram, Ghaziabad) expired on December 18, 2013. Her mortal remains were consigned to flames at Hindon Ghat on December 19, 2013.

Pandit Mohan Lal Talashi



Koshur Samuth Ghaziabad held a meeting on 8th December, 2013 to condole the sad demise of Pandit Mohan Lal Talashi, the *Karmayogi* father of Shri M. K. Talashi, one of the founder members of Swami Mastbab Ashram and Cashier, Koshur Samuth, Ghaziabad.

Pandit Mohan Lal Talashi was a perfect saint who left for heavenly abode on November 29, 2013. He was the maternal uncle of Shri B. L. Mahaldar, General Secretary, *Koshur Samuth.*

Prithvi Nath Kaul Sahib (1928-2013)

Shri P. N. Kaul Sahib of Chhanapora, Srinagar (previously residing at Habba Kadal) left for his heavenly abode on December 26, 2013 in Stockton, California. Shri Kaul was born to Pt. Madhusudan Kaul Sahib and Shrimati Kamla Kaul. He received his B.A. degree from Punjab University and his Bachelor's and Master's degree in Electrical Engineering from Wisconsin University in the USA in 1952. After returning from USA, he joined Electric Dept J&K. He then joined as Head of Dept. Electrical Engineering Polytechnic College Srinagar before rejoining the Electric Dept J&K from where he retired. He moved to the US in 2001.

Shri Kaul is survived by his wife, Smt. Raj Mohini Kaul, daughters, Nirja Walia, wife of Col. P.K. Walia, Girja Raina, wife of Dr. Surrender Raina, Anjana Kaul, wife of Ashtosh Kaul, and Illa Ganjoo, wife of Ravi Ganjoo. Shri Kaul was blessed with grand children and great grand children.

Shri Kaul was a devoted husband and a loving father. He was loved and respected by his friends, relatives and students. He was intelligent, caring, of good nature, with a great sense of duty and always willing to help. He will be remembered fondly and missed by all who knew him.

On a personal note, we grew under his shadow and always enjoyed his intellectual discussions. He was kind hearted and full of wisdom, a man of action. May the departed soul rest in peace!

- Surinder Kaul, USA

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